

The Need for Application

For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, ⁷a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?—Psalm 89:6-7

What is the Fear of the Lord?

There is an infinite gap in worth and dignity between God the Creator and man the creature, even though man has been created in the image of God. The fear of God is a heartfelt recognition of this gap—not a putdown of man, but an exaltation of God.¹—Jerry Bridges

As Martin Luther said, it is a filial fear, the fear of a child who is in awe of his father and doesn't want to do anything that would violate his father and disrupt their loving relationship.²—R. C. Sproul

Filial fear is a holy inclination of the heart, generated by God in the hearts of His children, whereby they, out of reverence for God, take careful pains not to displease God, and earnestly endeavor to please Him in all things.³—Wilhelmus a Brakel

A mature fear of the Lord is more akin to awe, devotion and worship. It is a response that says, "Your glory is irresistible." ... It is not simply a passive devotion; it follows Christ in obedience. It searches out his will and can't wait to do it.⁴—Ed Welch

Better Caught than Taught

Examine our own hearts:

Isaiah 66:2—... But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

- Am I humble and contrite before the Lord, respecting His authority over me and recognizing His infinite greatness?
- How seriously do I take the Word of God? Do I tremble at God's Word? Do I diligently apply it to my life, obey its commands conscientiously, take its warnings seriously, and heed its teaching?

Psalm 33:8-9—Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! ⁹For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

- Do I submit to God's authority over me joyfully and willingly? Do I complain about His providences or trust Him in them?
- Do I live in daily awareness of His presence recognizing that all I do, say, think, and feel are before His gaze?

1. Bridges, Jerry. *The Practice of Godliness*. (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1983), 21.

2. Sproul, R. C. "Ligonier Ministries: The Teaching Fellowship of R.C. Sproul." Ligonier.org, n.d. Web. 27 Mar. 2013. <<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/wisdom-and-knowledge/>>

3. Brakel, Wilhelmus à. *The Christian's Reasonable Service* Trans. Bartel Elshout. Ed. Joel R. Beeke. Vol. 3. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 1994), 53.

4. Welch, Edward T. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2001), 162.

Psalm 86:11—Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.

- Am I eager to follow and obey God or am I straining to get my own way? Am I consistent in my obedience?
- Am I grateful for God's correction and discipline?

Classic orthodoxy states: "Justification...is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone." The Protestant reformers, like Martin Luther, however emphasized that a sinner is "justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone." What they meant is that justifying faith is accompanied by evidentiary proofs.⁵—Arnold Frank

Proverbs 3:7—Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

- Do I hate evil? Do I quickly turn away from it, not entertaining anything that would pollute my soul?

Barriers to Learning the Fear of the Lord

- General lack of respect for authority
- Unbalanced view of God
- Dismissive attitude toward the Word of God
- Casualness in worship and prayer

Encouragements to Learning the Fear of the Lord

- Prayer—Jeremiah 32:38-41; Psalm 86:11
- Exposure to the Word of God—Deuteronomy 4:10; Proverbs 2:1-10
- A correct and balanced view of God
- Respect for authority—John 5:19, 14:31, 12:49-50
- Realization of their sinful, needy condition—Proverbs 3:7
- Recognition of the presence of God

The fact that God sees every aspect of our lives may, at first, leave us afraid and eager to hide from God rather than in awe, wanting to embrace him. But the fear of the Lord makes us aware both of God's holy purity and hatred of sin and his holy patience and forgiveness. When we remember both, we have no reason to run in fear, especially since there is no place to run beyond the gaze of God. Instead as we look at the Lord we see that he invites, cleanses, and empowers us to grow in holiness.⁶—Ed Welch

- Understanding their need for God—Acts 17:24-25
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5. Frank, Arnold L. *The Fear of God, a Forgotten Doctrine: Learning from Puritan Preaching*. (Ventura: Nordskog Pub., 2008), 60.

6. Welch, Edward T. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*. (Phillipsburg: P & R Pub., 2001), 177.

Jerry Bridges' steps for growing in dependence on God⁷:

1. Take time at the beginning of each day to acknowledge your dependence on God for life and breath and everything else... Thank Him for specific blessings.
 2. Think ahead through your day. Acknowledge your dependence on God for all your foreseen activities of the day, asking for His direction and enablement in each of them.
 3. Commit to Him the *unforeseen* events of the day, again asking for His ability to respond to each in a way pleasing to Him.
 4. Seek to develop the habit of continually offering throughout the day those short, silent prayers that recognize your powerlessness and His power.
 5. ...pray regularly that God will help you and make you more and more aware that you are in fact dependent on Him for life and breath and everything else.
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Steps for children to growing in dependence on God⁸:

1. Every morning, tell God you need Him today. Thank Him for His blessings.
2. Think about your day and ask God to help you in every part of your day.
3. Ask Him to help you with the parts of your day you don't know about yet.
4. Pray all day long telling God you need Him and asking for His help.
5. Every night tell God to help you to understand that you need Him.
6. Requirement of obedience
7. Instill in them a hatred of evil

Conclusion

*Those eyes which have no fear of God before them now, shall have the terrors of hell before them forever...*⁹—Charles Spurgeon

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7. Bridges, Jerry. *The Practice of Godliness*. (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1983), 209-210.
8. Ibid.
9. Spurgeon, C. H. *The Treasury of David, Vol. II* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 174.