



## Ecclesiastes 12 Part 1: Fear God

### **Conclusion of the matter: V.13-14 Fear God, Obey Him**

#### **Unhealthy Fear:**

**Fearless:** I'm in control (pride). I am God.

**Fear of Man:** Others are God to me. Sinful craving of approval (pride)

**Fear of Circumstances:** Getting eyes off what is true/best. Root is control (pride).

**Fear of Future/unknown/failure-** Pride; control; Trust issue.

**Healthy balanced fear:** A balanced awe, respect for the immeasurable power of God tempered by the love of God who always is a good Father to me.

#### **Imbalanced fear means I go to the extremes because I misunderstand His character:**

1. I fear because my focus is only on his power to crush me but ignores His tempering love.
2. I don't fear him at all because I only see him as a cosmic genie to be manipulated to get stuff.

#### **How we fear God directly impacts how we live out our faith and our joy in it:**

<b>Too Much Fear (not in view of His love)</b>	<b>Too Little Fear (awe, respect)</b>	<b>Balance</b>
I'll be legalistic in obedience; and see His commands as a burden	I'll see his commands as optional advice; and do as I see best	I'll see obedience as a joy, knowing by faith all things eventually work for my good.
Prayer will be distant, mechanical and boring or I won't pray at all.	I'll always seek His blessings rather than His will for me.	I'll seek His face before His hand (see prayer as the way to build relationship)
I'll see trials as punishment	I'll doubt Him in difficulties	I'll see trials as testing/loving discipline
I'll lean towards self-condemnation	I'll have distorted cheap grace	I'll see confession as relationship restoration

**Diagnostic tool for what fear is dominant in your life:** *What you fear the most will control you the most.* Anxieties are often the check engine light that points to what we are sinfully fearing and is controlling us.

#### **How do we cultivate a healthy fear?**

1. **Radical Remembering:** Clear view of the majesty, holiness and power of God. Ex. 20; I cultivate this through **remembering His:**
  - a. **Power:** Ps. 8,19 The only response when I consider creations majesty: *Who is man that you are mindful of him?* John falls down when given a glimpse: Rev. 1:12-18.
  - b. **Holiness:** We see our sin relative to others rather than against a Holy God. I cultivate this by holding myself up to the mirror of His commands as a tutor, showing my need. Mt. 10:28 *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*
2. **Prayerful Praise:** When I praise God for what he's done in my life, I'll build a healthy fear.
3. **Total Trust:** The key to overcoming fear is total and complete trust in God. I cultivate this by reading and applying what God has to say about my life so that I experience that he is trustworthy. Deut. 31: *gather and hear the word so that your children might learn to fear God.*

#### **Grow Group Questions:**

1. How do fears often reveal what is controlling us? What am I fearing or anxious about?
2. How do my past experiences influence how I view or fear God? (Like my family narratives or view of a parent?)
3. Do I have too little awe/respect of God's power and majesty, or do I see him as an angry God waiting for me to mess up? What is the key to a balanced and healthy fear of God?
4. Deut.17 says that the king is to write out his own copy of the word so that he'd learn to fear God. What's the correlation between the word and learning to fear?