

Faithfulness and Fearing the Lord
“...but a faithful man who can find?”
(12-10-22)

“Your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure. Therefore faint not, hold on and hold up, in ways of well-doing, and *Heaven shall make amends for all!*” — Thomas Brooks

“Take away the fear of God from any profession of godliness, and all that is left is the stinking carcass of pharisaism, barren religiosity, or calculated hypocrisy!” Albert Martin

“Men could be content to have the kingdom of heaven; but they are loathe to fight for it. They choose rather to go in a feather bed to hell than to be carried to heaven in a ‘fiery chariot’ of zeal and violence.” — Thomas Watson

“The fear of the Lord is the soul of godliness!” John Murray

“The Church does not need brilliant personalities but faithful servants of Jesus and the brethren. Not in the former but in the latter is the lack.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Many people will profess faithfulness, but few will demonstrate it. The virtue of faithfulness is often costly, and few people are willing to pay the price. But for the godly person, faithfulness is an absolutely essential quality of his character, regardless of what it might cost.” — Jerry Bridges

“The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else where as if you do not fear God you fear everything else.” Oswald Chambers

[The faithful man] “He has his back to the world, his face toward heaven and a Book in his hand.” — John Bunyan

“I call it [fear of God] the highest duty, because it is, as I may call it, not only a duty in itself, but, as it were, the salt that seasoneth every duty. For there is no duty performed by us that can by any means be accepted of God, if it be not seasoned with godly fear.” John Bunyan

“I have precisely one lifetime to make certain the Gospel survives and thrives in another generation – I must labor faithfully and invest wisely.” — John Kitchen

“All wickedness flows from a disregard of God...Since the fear of God is the bridle by which our wickedness is held in check, its removal frees us to indulge in every kind of licentious conduct (without moral restraint).” John Calvin

Review & Intro:

(1) Can you be a godly man and yet be devoid of faithfulness? Are there any examples of people in Scripture who claimed to be followers of God and yet in the end proved faithless (Josh 7:20-21; 1 Sam 15:17-23; Isa 5:8-24; Acts 5:1-11; 20:29-30; 1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 1:16-17; 3 Jn 9-10)? What is discouragingly revealing from the truth declared in both Prov 20:6 and Psalm 12:1-2? Is there any correlation of the reality from the two previous passages with the modern church? Explain? Look up the term faithfulness or faithful in a few dictionaries and give some definitions. What would be some synonyms for faithfulness? The terms “faithful” or “faithfulness” are used 150 plus times in the Bible and the bulk of those declare and point to the faithfulness of whom (Deut 7:9; Ps 33:4; 145:13; Lam 3:23; 1 Cor 1:8-9; 1 Thess 5:24; 1 Peter 4:19; Heb 10:23; 1 Jn 1:9)? Why is this point so encouraging to the godly man as he trains himself to godliness (Ps 40:11; 89:1-2; 119:86; 1 Cor 10:13; Titus 1:1-3; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 11:11; Rev 1:5; 19:11; 21:5; 22:6)? If God were all things but not faithful, what hope would we have? Read Psalm 89 and count how many times faithfulness is mentioned. How does God’s faithfulness drive everything in this Psalm and what bearing does that have on David and the nation? How does this truth also drive the godly man’s conduct similar to 1 Pet 1:15-16? Now look up these passages and explain how important faithfulness to God’s revealed will is in the godly man’s walk (Mt 25:21-23; Lk 12:42-44; 16:10-13; 19:17; 1 Cor 4:2; 2 Tim 2:2; Rev 2:10)?

(2.) Read Prov 14:2 and explain how a study on the fear of the Lord gets to the heart of faithfulness before the Lord? Read these passages and explain what is lost when the fear of the Lord is forgotten (Deut 32:15-18; Judg 3:7; Ps 36:1; 106:19-22 cf. Prov 8:12 also compare Ex 9:20 with 9:30)? How did Nehemiah describe his brother (Neh 7:2)? What did Jethro help Moses do (Ex 18:21)? How did God describe Levi (Mal 2:4-6)? Why did Nehemiah treat the people better than the other governors (Neh 5:15-16)? Why was Job declared to be a blameless man and upright, meaning a just or honest man? What grounded and drove this character (Job 1:1)? And yet, Job’s faithfulness is heightened by his growing sense of what at the end of the book (Job 42:1-6)? Of course, Jesus Christ is the greatest example of what faithfulness looks like (Heb 3:1-6; 1 Pet 2:21-25) and Isaiah says prophetically of Christ that His delight will be in what (Isa 11:1-5)? Therefore, as we will learn throughout this study, faithfulness to the Lord is ultimately a consequence of what? How do you see this truth declared in Ecc 12:13-14? Read Proverbs 14:27 and explain how the fear of the Lord and life go together? Proverbs is a book all about what? What theme permeates Proverbs from beginning to end (See 1:7 & 31:30) and you could even say bookends the Bible (Gen 22:12 & Rev 19:5)? What does Proverbs 1:7 mean and how does Proverbs 9:10-11 bring clarity? The fear of the Lord leads to what (Prov 19:23) and provides what for the family who is led by a man who fears God (Prov 14:26)? How will a study on the fear of the Lord better help us see how godliness is a response to who God is?

(3.) Read both 2 Cor 5:11 with 1 Jn 4:18 and explain what we must understand and guard against when doing a study on the fear of the Lord? Many have defined the fear of the Lord as “reverential awe” which is not an exhaustive definition but a helpful place to begin. To bring further clarity look up these words in multiple dictionaries and write down what you find and see if you can find an archaic meaning to the words as well...

Awe =

Reverence =

Is this “reverential awe” what you see when you read Gen 22:12; 28:12-22; Ex 1:17; 20:20; Lev 19:32; Deut 17:19; Josh 24:14? What do you see connected in these verses regarding the fear of the Lord Gen 28:17; Ex 15:11; Deut 7:21; 10:17; 28:58; Ps 89:7; 99:3; 130:4; Ezek 1:18 cf. 28; 2 Lk 1:50; 5:6-11; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 11:7? There are two primary ways the word fear, with God as the object, is rightly understood in the Bible and one of them is seen in showing a reverential respect, awe inspiring wonder, and humbled honor to the one being “feared.” However, this is only part of the picture as there is another way the fear of the Lord is expressed in Scripture. Read these passages and explain what you see and if it is more than a response of reverential respect (Gen 3:10; Ex 3:1-6; 14:31; Deut 6:13-15; 17:1-7; 21:18-21 WOW; Ps 2:11; 50:3, 16-22; 90:11; 119:110; Ecc 12:13; Isa 6:1-6; Jonah 1:10,16; Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4-7; 2 Cor 5:10-11; Acts 5:11; Phil 2:12-13; Heb 10:26-31; 1 Peter 1:17; Jude 22-23; Rev 14:7)? So, we can see how we are to recognize and remember what about God (Rom 11:22) and thus we are to offer acceptable worship to Him with what (Heb 12:28-29)? In what you have learned how does the Bible express the fear of the Lord and how should we then understand it?

Remember Mr. and Mrs. Beaver in Lewis’ Chronicles of Narnia? “Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.” “That you will dearie, and make no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver. “If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or just plain silly.” “Then he is safe?” said Lucy. “Safe?” said Mr. Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

Calvin’s words are helpful as this lesson closes. *“For, to begin with, the pious mind does not dream up for itself any God it pleases but contemplates the one and only true God. And it does not attach to him whatever it pleases, but is content to hold him to be as he manifest himself; furthermore the mind always exercises the utmost diligence and care not to wander astray, or rashly or boldly to go beyond his will...Because it sees him to be a righteous judge, armed with severity to punish wickedness, it ever holds his judgement seat before its gaze, and through fear of him restrains itself from provoking his anger. Besides, this mind restrains itself from sinning, not out of dread of punishment alone; but, because it loves and reveres God as Father, it worships and adores him as Lord.”*¹

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1967), 42-43. Emphasis added.