

IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD STRICTLY AN OLD TESTAMENT REALITY?

Luke 1:50 “From generation to generation he is merciful to those who fear him.”

Acts 9:26-31 “And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. ³⁰ And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.”

Romans 3:10-18 “None is righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one.”

¹³ “Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.”

¹⁴ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery,

¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.”

¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Jude 1:23 “Save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.”

2 Corinthians 5:11 “Therefore, because we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people, but we are well known to God, and I hope we are well known to your consciences too.”



2 Corinthians 7:1 “Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.”

1 Peter 2:17 “Honor all people, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the king.”

- ▶ As we can see, fearing God is not only an Old Testament paradigm.
- ▶ But you might ask, “Doesn’t the Bible tell us to fear and not to fear?”

Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

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

1 John 4:17-18 “By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”

Acts 9:31 “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.”

- ▶ To further confuse the subject we have a limited definition in English:

FEAR

noun

1. A very unpleasant or disturbing feeling caused by the presence or imminence of danger.
2. A state or condition marked by this feeling.
3. A feeling of disquiet or apprehension.

Hebrews 4:12-13 “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from



his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

- ▶ If we use the word as our standard then the answer is *both*.
- ▶ The key is understanding the context!

The Bible speaks of two different kinds of fear and both are applicable to the saint for different situations.

IN HEBREW:

Arats: to cause to tremble, terrify

Yare: revere, worship, obey

IN GREEK:

Phobos: fear, dread, terror

Phobeo: to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience

- ▶ Why do you suppose that God repeatedly tells us to fear Him?

Psalm 50:16-21 “But to the wicked God says:

“What right have you to recite my statutes
or take my covenant on your lips?

¹⁷ For you hate discipline,

and you cast my words behind you.

¹⁸ If you see a thief, you are pleased with him,

and you keep company with adulterers.

¹⁹ “You give your mouth free rein for evil,

and your tongue frames deceit.

²⁰ You sit and speak against your brother;

you slander your own mother's son.

²¹ These things you have done, and I have been silent;

you thought that I was one like yourself.

But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.”

- ▶ Are you satisfied with your relationship with God?



Isaiah 33:5-6 “The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, ⁶and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.”

Isaiah 11:1-4 “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ²And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,…”

- ▶ In your walk with the Lord have you grieved over someone who has walked away from the Faith?

Matthew 10:26-33 “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³²So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

1. THE FEAR OF GOD IS A GIFT FROM HIM

Philippians 2:12-13 “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*; for it is God who works in you both *to will and to do* for His good pleasure.”



2. THE FEAR OF GOD PRODUCES GODLY HUMILITY

Hebrews 11:7 “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, *moved with godly fear*, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is *according to faith*.”

Proverbs 22:4 points out the blessings that result from this type of reverential attitude toward God: “By *humility and the fear of the Lord* are riches and honor and life.”

3. THE FEAR OF GOD INSTILLS OBEDIENCE

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, *to be well pleasing to Him*. For we must *all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, *the fear of the Lord*, we persuade men.”

Psalms 119:63 “I am a companion of *all who fear You*, and of those who *keep Your precepts*.”

4. THE FEAR OF GOD DEVELOPS GODLY COURAGE

Psalms 27:1-3 “The Lord is my light and my salvation; *whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* . . . Though an army may encamp against me, *my heart shall not fear*; though war may rise against me, *in this I will be confident*.”

2 Timothy 1:6-7 “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands [this being the means to conferring God’s Spirit and authorization to spiritual office]. For God has *not given us a spirit of fear*, but of *power and of love and of a sound mind*.”

5. THE FEAR OF GOD HELPS US AVOID SIN

Proverbs 8:13 “The *fear of the Lord* is to *hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate*.”

Proverbs 16:6 “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity [lawlessness]; and by *the fear of the Lord one departs from evil*.”



2 Corinthians 7:1 “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*”

6. THE FEAR OF GOD BUILDS AND ENCOURAGES GODLY LEADERSHIP

One of the requirements to serve God is to rightly fear Him. **Exodus 18:21** says Moses, following the wise advice of his father-in-law, set up leaders with the following qualities: “able men, such as *fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.*”

In **2 Chronicles 19:5-9** Jehoshaphat, one of the righteous kings of Judah, did the same. “He set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, ‘Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Now therefore, *let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes*’ . . . And he commanded them, saying, ‘Thus you shall act *in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a loyal heart.*’”

7. THE FEAR OF GOD LEADS TO LOVING GOD AND THOSE LIKE-MINDED

The early Church was characterized by godly fear and love that led to an affectionate fellowship among the brethren. As **Acts 9:31** describes: “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria *had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.*”

As John wrote in **1 John 4:16-19**, “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have *boldness* in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is *no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear*, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.”

- ▶ We see here that *godly fear and love* expel the *wrong type of fear*.

