

## Sons of a Holy God: *Navigating the tension between grace and the fear of God*

### 1. Saved by Grace

- a. If you are a Christ follower, a believer in Jesus, then you are a dearly beloved child of God.
- b. The grace of God has provided an eternal connection, right-standing, and the means of having a real relationship with the God of the universe as a father.
- c. There is no good deed or the performance of any set of righteous steps that we do to access this undeserved favor and unconditional love. As Ephesians 2:8 says, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
  - i. We don’t work to receive the gift of salvation and right standing with God. Scripture says that salvation is a gift. We don’t work to *keep* God’s love and stay in his family but... We do work to *build* that relationship and grow.
- d. But what I see continually in my own life and in the church as a whole, is that we have become too familiar with God because we don’t understand that even though we are His beloved children, we are sons of a HOLY God.
  - i. *Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. 29For our God is a devouring fire - Hebrews 12:28-29*
- e. And since we know that, according to Malachi 3:6, God does not change and Hebrews 13:8, Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever, we live in a tension between grace and fear, and hopefully today we can begin to have a better understanding of this.

### 2. Fear of God

- a. First of all, let me say that the Fear of God is NOT being afraid OF Him or being punished by Him.
- b. The fear of God means having great RESPECT for Him, His word, and His presence.
- c. When we operate in the fear of God, it means that His opinion is the opinion we hold higher than any other. Higher than our friends' opinions, higher than the world's opinions, and even higher than our own.
- d. True fear of God is synonymous with worship.
  - i. Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' " - Matt 4:10 NKJV
  - ii. TRUE WORSHIP SAYS 'I HUMBLE MYSELF BEFORE YOU, NOT JUST WITH THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH, BUT WITH WHAT I DO'.
- e. Fear of the Lord under the New Covenant
  - i. There IS a tension between Grace and Godly Fear, but it's a good one. As a believer in Christ, our position as a son of God is never threatened. Please understand that. These two concepts don't contradict one another, but provide a work out for our faith and help us GROW.
    - 1. *Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. <sup>13</sup>For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.* - Phil 2:12 NLT
  - ii. Grace provides confidence and comfort as a child of God; Fear provides correct perspective.
  - iii. Grace and fear (respect) working together create a secure foundation
    - 1. *"In the [reverent] fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And His children will [always] have a place of refuge."*- Proverbs 14:26 AMP

- f. The benefits of Holy Fear
  - i. Unlock practical favor
    - 1. *“How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world.”- Psalms 31:19 NLT*
  - ii. Grow in wisdom
    - 1. *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. - Proverbs 9:10 NKJV*
  - iii. Closeness with God
    - 1. *“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.”- Psalm 25:14 ESV*
- 3. What does this look like from a practical standpoint?
  - a. In services: respect His power, His presence, and His word
  - b. In life: His opinion is the opinion we hold higher than any other. Higher than our friends’ opinions, higher than the world’s opinions, and even higher than our own.
    - i. Psalm 25:14 - Friendship with God is for those who fear Him, and when we fear God, we don’t blow Him off. He doesn’t reject us as a child, but when we have no respect for Him, he cannot trust us intimately as a friend.