

## The Fear of the Lord

Dr. Michael Reeves

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### Not All Fear is the Same

Fear is a strong yet baffling emotion. The Biblical picture can be equally confusing. Is it good or bad?

- Didn't Jesus come to rescue us from fear? The most common command in scripture is, "Do not be afraid." (Lk 1:74-75; 1 Jn 4:18)
- Yet we are repeatedly called to fear, and to fear God (Pro 9:10; Ps 86:11; Lk 18:2; 2 Cor 7:1)
- But fearing God feels negative. Why would any God worth loving want to be feared?

Understanding our culture helps us see why even Christians often see fear as a wholly negative thing, despite its prominence in Scripture

- We have lost God as the proper object of fear, that healthy fear that controlled all our other fears.
- Without a kind Father's providential care, we are left uncertain about the shifting sands of morality and reality
- Other concerns assume a divine ultimacy in our minds, so we feel helpless and fragile

Instead, we can rejoice in the paradox that the Gospel both frees us from fear and gives us fear. In fact, the Bible has good news about our fears and the fear of God

- If the loss of the fear of God ushered in our age of anxiety, then the fear of God is the antidote. A proper understanding of the fear of God is just what we need.
- Not all fear is unhealthy and unpleasant. We must distinguish between right fear and wrong fear.
- The right kind frees us from crippling fear, giving us instead a most delightful fear (Isa 11:1-3)

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*"The fear of God is the soul of godliness."* – John Murray