

The Fear of the Lord

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Growing in the Fear of God

The Fear of God is the heartbeat of our new life in Christ. It is the soul of godliness and the cause of true Christian behavior. How do we grow in it?

- We can mistake the fear of God for an outward and hollow show. Martin Luther: “To fear God is not merely to fall down on our knees. Even a godless man can do that.”
- Instead, scripture presents the fear of God as a matter of the heart’s inclinations (Ps 112:1)
- It should stir our affections so we despise the sins we once treasured, and treasure the God we once abhorred (Ps 47:1-2)

Our ideas on how to cultivate the fear of God depends on how we think our hearts work

- Martin Luther: “Our sin is not merely a matter of our actions and our habits. Our actions merely manifest what’s going on deeper.” (Lk 6:45)
- We need radical renewal. Not self-improvement but a profound change of heart, so that we love and long differently (Ps 37:4)
- Only the Holy Spirit can bring about this fundamental change in disposition that we need (Eze 36:26-27)

The most powerful heart change comes at the cross. Only the preaching of Christ turns a heart to desire righteousness and fear God with a loving, trembling, filial adoration.

- The forgiveness found at the cross gives us this right kind of fear (Ps 130:4)
- We weep at our wickedness, simultaneously repenting and rejoicing. It’s more wonderful than we dared dream, leading us to a deeper and more fearfully happy adoration of the Savior

Since this is the soul of Godliness and the essence of the new heart, then every believer should prioritize the means of grace and pray with David, “unite my heart to fear your name” (Ps 86:11)

- But this should also be a challenge for Bible teachers. It should shape the content and intent of teaching so that sinner tremble and saints quake in wonder