



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 36: Reverence and Awe

Hebrews 12:28–29 *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

We tend to think all sincere worship pleases God equally. That as long as we mean it, He will receive it. Scripture consistently suggests otherwise. Cain brought an offering and was refused; Nadab and Abihu offered "unauthorized fire" and did not survive it; Jesus warned of those who worship "in vain." Worship is not automatically welcome simply because it is offered. And here Hebrews tells us the ingredient that makes it acceptable; not creativity, volume, or even sincerity, but "reverence and awe." Acceptable worship is reverent worship. That single word reframes everything we bring to God.

The text then explains why we must bring true worship with reverence and awe: "our God is a consuming fire." In an age that has grown very casual about God, remaking Him into a comfortable companion who exists mainly for our benefit, this text calls us back to the truth. The God we worship is glorious, holy, and not to be trifled with.

The two Greek words are worth considering. "Reverence" is *eulabeia* — a careful, cautious devotion, the attitude of one who handles holy things with great care. And "awe" (in many translations, "godly fear") is *deos*, a word for profound reverential fear. Together they describe worship that takes God seriously — that comes into His presence not flippantly, but humble, and full of wonder. This is not terror but the awe of a redeemed child who knows exactly how holy his Father is.

Now notice the balance the writer strikes, because it's essential. In the same breath, he tells us to "be grateful" and to worship with "reverence and awe." Gratitude and reverence, joy and holy fear, held together. We are not left cowering before this consuming fire; we are invited to draw close and be warmed by it. To worship, grateful for a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Yet our gratitude never

dissolves into casualness. John MacArthur often lamented how modern worship can drift toward treating God as a buddy, stripped of His majesty — and this text is the corrective, reminding us that acceptable worship holds together both the nearness of grace and the greatness of God.

That phrase, “a consuming fire,” is where reverence touches purity most directly. Fire consumes what is impure; it burns away what cannot stand its heat. To draw near to a holy God is to draw near to a refining flame. Not intended to destroy His children, but to purify them. The reverent worshiper doesn’t casually carry his cherished sins into the presence of the consuming fire; he lets that fire burn them away. Acceptable worship is reverent worship that is grateful for grace and forgiveness. Handle these holy things with care.

TAKE AWAY

If God is so casual that we have forgotten He’s a consuming fire it is time that we let that refining flame burn away what we may never surrender on our own.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to restore a holy reverence and awe in your worship, and to let the fire of His holiness purify your heart.