

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD" | PROVERBS 14:26-27 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- When you hear the word "fear", what comes to mind?

"Dealing with the Tension and What the Fear of the Lord Is and Isn't" Proverbs 14: 26-27

People often have smaller fears of the wrong thing. The fear of the Lord is taking God seriously out of awe and wonder at His love.

- What do people fear besides God that impacts their choices?
- What does taking God and His love seriously look like?

"Everyone Fears Something" Proverbs 29:25

What people fear most becomes their authority and shapes their decisions, so fearing God, like a child not wanting to disappoint their parent, leads to serving Him.

- How does fearing others trap or snare people like the Proverb says?
- Why is serving God well important to His people?

"What the Fear Of the Lord Produces" Proverbs 14: 26-27

Proverbs says taking God seriously leads to confidence, a refuge, and a fountain of life. It turns one away from the snares of death.

- What does it look like to have a "refuge" and "fountain of life" as a follower of Jesus today.
- How does God's wisdom keep people from the "snares of death"?

"Christ Connection: Fear That Draws Near" Matthew 26: 36-46

Jesus shows trust and surrender as He prays "not my will, but yours be done" when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- How does Jesus' relationship with the Father reshape how we think about fearing the Lord?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

Everyone fears something and that impacts decisions and the course of life. The fear of the Lord means to take God and His love seriously, which leads to confidence and a full life, keeping one from destruction. Jesus modeled a healthy fear of the Lord most powerfully when He surrendered and went to the cross.

- Have you been giving God or something else the final word in your life?
- What decision are you facing that would change if you truly trusted God in it?
- Pray that God's love would overwhelm you and replace your fears.

2 - The Fear of The Lord

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online (2nd).
- B. Slide1-4 Larry: Movie Night. Single Moms. GriefShare. DC.
- C. Slide5 Prayer: No Church Prayer next Sunday due to JM ... But there is Prayer today for our Missionaries, 1:30pm in the Agape Room.
- D. Slide6-7 JM Workshops next Sunday 2nd & 3rd service. 1st hear from John.
- E. Slide8 Prayer: Lord, if *the fear of the Lord* is the **beg**, the **starting point** to knowledge/wisdom, **then** help us *understand exactly* what **You** mean by it, **by yur HS**.

II. Intro: The Fear of The Lord

- A. When you hear the word **fear**, what comes to mind? (something pos or neg? Why?)
- B. Growing up, how was “*the fear of God*” explained or modeled for you? (*Maybe* - Do it, **or** I put *the fear of God* in you!)
- C. *Illustration: Picture someone driving, your in the passenger seat, and they are constantly watching the dashboard, checking the gauges, looking for warning lights, the whole time they’re driving. You ask, “*Is there something wrong?*” They say, “*No, I’m just trying to make sure nothing goes wrong.*”
- D. Often we find ourselves **living life** constantly *checking our life’s gauges*. *How am I doing? What do people think? Am I falling behind? What if this doesn’t work out?*
 - 1. We’re watching everything except ... **Who** is actually in control.
 - 2. Proverbs says the issue **isn’t** that we **fear too much** - it’s that we often **fear the wrong thing**. And when **fear is Misplaced**, it quietly becomes the one driving our decisions.
 - 3. That’s why Proverbs keeps repeating this phrase - ‘*The fear of the Lord*’ - **Not to scare us... but to **steady** us.**
- E. Big Idea: A healthy fear of God brings *clarity, security, and life*.
- F. Slide9 Remember from last week: We’re studying *Wisdom For The Way* (book theme)

1. Proverbs **doesn't** save us **but** it shows us - **how the saved live**.
2. Life is full of *choices*, **Wisdom** helps us make better ones. [*skillful living*]
3. This **wisdom** help us from making decisions that aren't nec **sinful**, but definitely **unwise**. It's not about *being perfect* it's about **living well**.

III. Slide10a 1 DEALING WITH THE TENSION

- A. Let's be honest - *fear* doesn't sound like a great starting point for faith.
1. We like words like *love, grace, freedom*, **but** Proverbs keeps saying, '*The fear of the Lord*.'
 2. **Fear** sounds *negative*. **Fear** sounds *outdated*. **Fear** sounds like *distance* from God.
- B. Slide10b **But** Proverbs says **fear** isn't the problem - *misplaced fear* is.
1. *You-fear-something*: **God ...** or *something smaller*.
 - a) Some of those *smaller fears* are when we fear *people, failure, or loss*.
- C. We can all think of a time when **fear**, not faith, was *driving* one of our choices.

IV. Slide11a 2 WHAT THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS AND ISN'T

- A. How is *the fear of the Lord* different from being **afraid** of God?
- B. **Fear ≠ Terror**.
1. This is **not** fear of punishment. **Not** walking on eggshells. **Not** God waiting for you to mess up.
 2. Slide11b *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear*. 1Jn.4:18
 3. Slide11c **If we keep reading** (vs.19) this is our **prescription** "...*whoever fears has not been perfected in ...*" (reading your bible enough, praying enough, doing enough, making sure you never sin, making sure all your thoughts are perfect, making sure your church attendance, and your giving, and all the stuff **is lined up just right**). **NO** it doesn't say that. Your issue with *fear, anxiety, stress, worry, panic, phobias, & hyper vigilance* - are all stuff that comes out of **trauma and neglect, pain and emptiness**,

and ill-equipped emotions, and not feeling safe, *is not been perfected in* (drum roll) Slide11d ... *love!* His love can displace *any fear!*

a) Many perfectionist say, *that makes no sense*. They've been taught to make sure everything's just right. To *be made perfect in* ... making sure everything's just right. And it drives us away from what we really need ... which is Love.

C. Slide11e **Fear = Awe, Trust, Surrender.**

D. It's simply: **Awe** - God is bigger than me. **Trust** - God knows better than me. **Surrender** - God gets the final word, not me.

1. The fear of the Lord is *taking God seriously*.

2. So not that you would *run away from Him*, but that you'd *run to Him*.

3. So many people relate to God *fear/terror based and not love based*.

E. Slide12 Show 17 x's *Fear the Lord* in Proverbs. [each time it's in the *positive*]

V. Slide13a **3 EVERYONE FEARS SOMETHING**

A. *The question isn't if you fear something - it's what you fear most!*

B. Common *misplaced* fears: Fear of people's opinions. Fear of loss or lack. Fear of failure. *FOMO* Fear of missing out. Fear of losing control.

C. Slide13b Our problem is often fearing **man** over fearing **God**. Proverbs 29:25 *The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.*

D. Whatever you **fear most** will *quietly* become **your authority**.

1. Slide13c *That fear will:* **Shape** your decisions. **Set** your boundaries. **And Determine** your compromises.

E. Slide13d Lk.1:74 - Zechariah said, *that we ... might serve him without fear*. Opp?

1. *Which way is it?* - Luther distinguished it this way. When the bible speaks of *the fear of the Lord*, it speaks **not** of **the fear** a prisoner has who's being tortured by his tormentor, what Luther called **a servile**/a slaves **fear**, **but rather** he speaks of **a filial fear** (appropriate duty of a son or daughter) the fear we have of failing to **honor** and **glorify** God.

VI. Slide14a 4 WHAT THE FEAR OF THE LORD PRODUCES

A. It Produces Security

B. Proverbs 14:26a In the fear of the Lord one has **strong confidence**, (or, are *secure*).

1. **Not** anxiety-driven living. **Not** fragile faith. It's a settled confidence that God is trustworthy.

C. Slide14b It Produces Refuge

D. Beautiful phrase in 14:26b: *and his children will have a refuge*.

1. This fear doesn't **destabilize** - it **shelters**.

E. Slide14c It Produces Life

F. Proverbs 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.* [*fountain* - the place where water begins & continues to flow from]

1. **Fear of the Lord** = fountain of life & It keeps us from destructive paths.
2. It leads to **contentment** and **rest**.

G. (as believers) So many of our regrets come from **ignoring** wisdom, **not rejecting** God.

H. What **results** come from *fearing the Lord*? Confidence, Security, Refuge, Life, Rest.

I. Slide14d It Keeps a Life from Spinning out of Control

J. *Last week* I used an example of **a governor** on a small engine. *Let's pick that up again.*

K. Most small gasoline engines are designed to run safely at around 3,000–3,600 RPM.

1. If the engine spins faster than that: **bearings overheat, pistons can seize, the engine can literally tear itself apart.** *Slide14e [mention actual governor]
2. **So** manufacturers install a governor, which senses engine speed (RPM).
 - a) When the engine starts revving too high, the **governor**: *automatically restricts the throttle, limits fuel and air intake - keeps the engine within safe operating limits.*
3. *The governor doesn't stop the engine from working - **it keeps it working!**
 - a) *The engine wants to go faster but* the **governor** knows what *the engine can safely handle.* Without the governor, more power actually leads to **destruction**.

4. So engines don't destroy themselves **because** they lack power - they destroy themselves when there's nothing to restrain that power.
- a) Slide14f *The fear of the Lord* isn't there **to slow your life down**. It's there to keep your life from spinning out of control!

VII.Slide15a **5 CHRIST CONNECTION: FEAR THAT DRAWS NEAR**

- A. Now, this statement may **bristle** you, "*Jesus feared the Father*" - and He was **closer to Him** than anyone who ever lived.
1. This reframes **fear** as **relational**, **not** relationally **damaging**.
- B. One of the **clearest/finest** pictures of *The fear of the Lord* in Scripture is - **Jesus** in the Garden of Gethsemane.
1. **Jesus** knows exactly what's coming: *the cross, the suffering, the separation*. Luke tells us He's *in such anguish* that His sweat becomes like drops of blood.
 2. Slide15b And yet He prays, *Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from Me... nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done*.
 - a) That's *the fear of the Lord*: Not terror. Not distance. But reverent trust and surrender. [**fear** = awe, reverence, revere, surrender, proper alignment]
 - b) Slide15c Remember our *working definition* of **fear**: *A reverential awe that produces humble submission to a loving God*.
 3. Slide15d We can say, Jesus didn't fear the pain more than He feared **disobeying the Father**. He trusted the Father's will, even when **obedience** was costly.
 - a) And because Jesus feared the Father, **we are saved**.
 4. **The fear of the Lord** doesn't push us away from God, it anchors us to Him
- C. How does Jesus' relationship with the Father reshape how we think about fear?
1. Reverence and intimacy with God are not opposites, **but** partners.

VIII.Slide16a **6 PRACTICE: WHERE FEAR MEETS DECISION**

- A. What decision this week would change if you truly **trusted** God in it?

1. Eg: A **relationship** you're holding onto. A **compromise** you're justifying.
A step of **obedience** you're delaying. A fear-driven **choice** you keep making
- B. Wisdom grows where fear is *redirected* - away from *lesser things* and back to God.
- C. Slide 16b "The fear of the Lord isn't about being *scared* - it's about who gets the final word."
- D. In 2 weeks we'll see how the fear of the Lord shapes *something* we use every day - **our words** (Words & the Tongue).
- E. *Prayer: Lord, teach us to fear You rightly - not in a way that pushes us away, but in a way that brings us closer w/ clarity, confidence, and life.
- F. Keywords: Fear, awe, trust, revere.