

Fear God

By Grant Phillips

In the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, the wisest mortal man who ever lived, Solomon, concludes his examination of the reason for living by saying, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God**, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

In Genesis 42:18 Joseph said, *“I fear God”*. The Apostle John *“fell at His feet as dead”* when he saw Jesus in His glory (Revelation 1:17). Isaiah said that he was *“a man of unclean lips”* when he beheld *“the King, the Lord of hosts”* (Isaiah 6:5). In Revelation 14:7 an angel is proclaiming the Gospel to the inhabitants on the earth during the Tribulation by saying, *“...**Fear God**, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”*

In Revelation 22:9 the angel told John to *“worship God”*. The word for worship means to show profound reverence to one who is greater; i.e. fear God.

When we are told to fear God it means that we should stand in awe of Him, honor Him, respect Him, fear Him, worship Him, and reverence Him. (This list is non-inclusive.) Throughout the remainder of this article, when I use the term “fear” in relationship to God, reference this paragraph.

Our God is a loving God, and has more love for us than we can comprehend. It seems most Christians understand *this* attribute of God, but have we gotten lax in our understanding of our need to fear Him? Even some in the world recognize God’s attribute of “love”, but miss His attribute of “justice”. “Love” is mistakenly thought of as an emotional reaction, but that is totally false. Love is a mental attitude. Love does not react. Love initiates. It is true that God is love, but don’t stop there. Because He is love, His love will be forthcoming with justice. He will do what is right. It may hurt, but it will be right.

When I think of “fear God”, the first thing that comes to mind is “respect”. I believe that if we have a Godly respect for Him, it will pretty much cover most everything else. When we lose fear of God, we have no respect for anything.

- I remember when even the most ornery person in the community would show respect to Christians, especially the pastor of a church.
- I remember when children respected their parents and other adults.
- I remember when men respected women, and women demanded that respect.

I am reminded what our Lord says in Romans 3:12-18, *“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God*

before their eyes.” The heart of mankind is already evil (Jeremiah 17:9), but when we allow Satan to remove the fear of God in our heart, Christian or not, the last vestige of restraint to do evil is removed.

We currently live in a society where the fear of God is rapidly fading away, even in church circles. Our pace quickens with each step we take as we shy away from God. Our conscience hardens. The plea of the cross and Christian growth is barely a whisper. We as a society have become so brazen in our sins, we laugh in the face of God, and spit at Him as we turn back to our own lustful passions.

The world we live in could easily rival and surpass those decadent societies of yesteryear. This world preaches love and tolerance while it stands neck deep in hatred for anything remotely related to the one and only God of this world. We have lost our fear of God, and it is showing in every area of our lives.

Even in the churches, a nonchalance toward God is clearly on display. We zero in on the love of God, while totally ignoring His commands of obedience and warnings of judgment. We keep Him wrapped in swaddling clothes while hanging on the cross, but forget to consider the revelation of His deity (Revelation 1) after His ascension from the grave. We ordain and honor those who pervert the natural use of sex that He created between a husband and wife (man and woman). We entertain and amuse each other. We are now a social club. Dribble and nonsense ooze from the pulpits, while Satan laughs back stage.

Homes have been torn asunder by loveless spouses and rebellious progeny. Single family “homes”, without father or mother, are producing generations of total misfits. Children are now being placed in “homes” with two “dads” or two “moms”, providing them little to no chance to ever know the one and only true God and all that He commands.

Schools are replete with subject matter that they have no business teaching, some subjects that should be taught at home, and some that should never be taught by anyone. Homosexuality is crammed down the innocent throats of precious children whose minds are tender and trusting.

Abortion (the murder of unborn babies) has gruesomely taken the innocent lives of unborn children. There are basically three reasons women give for an abortion; (1) interference with work, school or other responsibilities, (2) can’t afford the upkeep of a child, and (3) don’t want to be a single parent, or problems with a husband or partner.

Jesus said, *“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”* (Mark 9:42) (This verse can refer both to young children or young converts to Christ, who are babes in Christ.) Our children are being attacked by Satan and his entourage with a viciousness that I have not seen in my lifetime until now. God help those who may be guilty of this.

All of this brings us back to one point, the fear of God in our lives. If we have no fear of punishment, we will do anything our wicked heart contrives.

Many children today are nothing more than little spoiled brats, and it isn't their fault. They have learned that they can do just about anything without being punished. Oh they may be warned continuously, and that is the problem ... no follow through after the first warning. Their manners in public are atrocious. They sass. Nothing is done. They have learned to have no fear (respect) for their parents. Therefore, they become monsters that society has to deal with. Children are always learning, and these particular ones are learning not to fear those in authority, which results in no respect for authority. Then they grow up. Now the police agencies and courts have to deal with these grown children who had no Godly guidance while growing up.

A police officer was explaining the other day how much more dangerous his job is than previously. He stated that many offenders of the law have no hesitation in attacking a trained, armed police officer. Just think how much more dangerous it has become for the general public.

There was once a generation (generally speaking) who did not participate in sexual activities prior to marriage, because of fear of the consequences from their ... parents. And oh yes, boys were interested in girls, and girls were interested in boys. They avoided circumstances that might involve an appearance from the police or other authority figure, because they did not want to face the consequences from their ... parents. They had both mother and father (married to each other) heading up the home. They showed respect in the church building, because they knew there would be consequences. They showed respect for school teachers, because there would be consequences if they did not. Their parents feared God, and they feared God. Could it be that this is our problem today, that we do not fear God? I think the answer is obvious.

There was a time that it was unheard of for people to live together and not be married. There were names for anyone who would do that. To be married to someone of the same sex wasn't even a thought.

We now live in a society where nothing is taboo. Violence is off the charts. This is what happens when people have no fear of God.

Jesus said, "*And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*" (Luke 17:26) How was it in the days of Noah? "*And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*" (Genesis 6:13)

Any daily reading of the news headlines screams of the violence upon the earth today. People do not fear God. Therefore, they fear no repercussions for their actions. There is nothing holding them back, so they live out the depravity within their souls.

God tells us all in His Word that, "*...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*". (Hebrews 9:27) If there is no fear in your heart toward God now, there certainly will be at the judgment (the Great White Throne judgment).

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, come to Him now. Ask Him to save you and make you a new person in Him. Ask Him to open your eyes to His love for you. Then fear Him. Show Him the respect He is due by your life being a living example of your fear of God. Otherwise, all you have to look forward to is what He records in the following verse: "*And*

I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15 NLT)

If you already are a child of God by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ your Lord, ask Him to open your eyes to any and all discrepancies that may be in your life that do not honor Him. Then fear God, and follow Him.

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