

THE TEACHING

LEGACY

OF DEREK PRINCE

The Lord's Treasure

Fear is a powerful word. The notion of fear elicits a response from virtually everyone—depending on the type of fear being discussed. Some fears are unhealthy and affect our behavior in negative ways: fear of the dark, fear of flying, fear of man. There's one fear, however, that's not unhealthy, but rather can be a key to success in your life. This fear is one we would all do well to cultivate in our lives. I'm referring to the fear of the Lord.

Still, the fear of the Lord may not top the list of topics you would want to learn about. You may say, "I don't like fear. I don't want to hear that message. It's not going to bless me." But let me encourage you to rethink your position. In Isaiah 33:6 there are eight little words that make all the difference: "The fear of the LORD is His treasure." The indication here is that the fear of the Lord is not something to be despised. It's God's treasure that He's sharing with His people.

Many Christians seem to believe the fear of the Lord is something from the Law of the Old Testament. I've witnessed many Christians act as if we don't need the fear of the Lord in our lives at all—that it's old-fashioned. That's totally unscriptural and incorrect. Let's look at a few simple facts from Scripture about the fear of the Lord. Psalm 19:9 says, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever." There's never a time when the fear of the Lord ceases to be relevant. It endures forever. Proverbs 23:17 says, "In the fear of the LORD continue all day

long.” So the fear of the Lord is forever and it’s for all day long. In other words, there is no time in your life when you should not be in the fear of the Lord.

Many people have a very negative view of what is meant by the fear of the Lord. To better understand what it is, I’ll begin by ruling out what it is not. First, the fear of the Lord is not natural fear. It’s not the kind of fear you experience in an automobile when you see you’re going to crash. Secondly, the fear of the Lord is not demonic fear. It is not something influenced by a spirit of fear—a demon. Over the years, I’ve ministered to hundreds of people who needed deliverance from the spirit of fear. But that’s not the fear of the Lord.

In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul says, “God has not given us a spirit of fear.” And in 1 John 4:18, John says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.” Tormenting fear is from the devil and it has no place in the life of a Christian. And the greatest remedy for the tormenting fear is the true fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord also is not fear of man. In fact, the fear of the Lord delivers us from the fear of man and enables us to show respect and honor for the Lord.

One of the best words to describe the fear of the Lord is *awe*, from which we get the word *awesome*. It expresses our reaction to majesty, to power, to holiness.

Another word I would use to describe the fear of the Lord is *reverence*. Reverence is a response to a revelation of God. You cannot demonstrate reverence without revelation. When God reveals Himself, I believe the only appropriate response is reverence.

And with it goes submissiveness. A submissive attitude toward God is an expression of the fear of the Lord in our lives. When we’re high-handed, arrogant, self-sufficient, self-proclaiming (as too many of us are), that has nothing to do with the fear of the Lord. There is no fear of the Lord in a person who conducts himself like that.

Another truth revealed in Scripture is that what you fear can become your god. In Genesis 31 Jacob is talking to his father-in-law Laban, and he’s saying, “You didn’t treat me right, but God looked after me.” In Genesis 31:42 he says:

“Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed.”

Jacob referred to God as “the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac.” In other words, what Isaac feared was the true God. It was his God. Then in Genesis 31:53, Jacob says,

“The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.”

The object of Isaac's fear was his God. Likewise, what *you* fear is *your* god. If you fear people's opinion, that's your god. If you fear poverty, that's your god. If you fear disease and sickness, that's your god. What you fear, for you, is god. Do you fear the Lord? Is He your God?

The Jesus Perspective

It's very informative to study the fear of the Lord in the light of Jesus. Jesus was God's own beloved Son who pleased His Father all His life and all His days. And yet when Isaiah speaks about the anointing of the Holy Spirit that was to mark Jesus out as Messiah—the Anointed One that Israel was expecting—he described seven distinct aspects of the Holy Spirit that would rest on Jesus. Isaiah 11:1–2 lists them:

*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

Here we see the sevenfold manifestation of the Holy Spirit—a list of the seven Spirits of God. The first one is the Spirit of the Lord, that is, the Spirit that speaks in the first person as God. In Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit says, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (NAS). The Holy Spirit was Himself speaking as God.

The list continues with the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. It's extremely significant that the final manifestation of the Holy Spirit that marked out Jesus as the Messiah and God's beloved Son was the fear of the Lord. We see this in Isaiah 11:3 where the prophet says:

*His delight is in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears...*

So Jesus was marked out as Messiah by the sevenfold anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Him. The seventh and final anointing was the fear of the Lord. And the very next words are, “His delight is in the fear of the LORD.”

Surely we cannot improve on Jesus. If God's beloved Son—our Messiah and Savior—was marked out by the fear of the Lord and if He delighted in the fear of the Lord, how can you or I ever dare to say we don't need the fear of the Lord?

It Must Be Learned

Let's look at the conditions that we must meet to have the fear of the Lord. In Psalm 34:11, the Holy Spirit is speaking and He says:

*Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD*

The fear of the Lord has to be taught. And if we listen to the Holy Spirit, He will teach us. If we don't listen, He won't teach us. The Holy Spirit goes on in Psalm 34:12–13 to describe the type of person you have to be to experience the fear of the Lord:

*Who is the man who desires life,
And loves many days, that he may see good?
Keep you tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit [guile].*

The first mark of the person who receives the fear of the Lord is manifested in his speech—the way he uses his mouth. Ask yourself this confrontational question: Does the way I speak represent the fear of the Lord? Or am I at times arrogant, self-pleasing, fearful, irritated, impatient or unwilling to receive correction? That's not the fear of the Lord.

I have been impressed deeply by the fact that we must choose the fear of the Lord. In Proverbs 1 God is speaking to people who have rejected Him, and He says some terrible words. Sometimes we don't really appreciate how forceful God can be. We have a picture in our minds of a courteous old gentleman up there in heaven who never says anything difficult or hard or unpleasant. He just cuddles us. That's not God. Read what He says in Proverbs 1:25–29:

*Because you disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.
Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD...*

That's God saying He will mock when terror comes. That's God saying He will not answer when called. The last two lines make the reason for all this clear: His people hated knowledge and did not *choose* the fear of the Lord. If you do not

choose the fear of the Lord, there is every indication that God will not restrain His judgments in your life. Earlier, in Proverbs 1:7 we see:

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

If we adopt a contemptuous attitude toward the fear of the Lord, we're simply advertising our own foolishness. Then in Proverbs 3:7 it says:

*Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.*

We are not to trust in our own wisdom. If you are brimming with self-confidence and think you have all the answers, you leave no place for the fear of the Lord.

Another thing it says is "Depart from evil." We are told that we cannot associate with evil and have the fear of the Lord. If we are going to have the fear of the Lord in our lives, we must depart from evil. We cannot combine evil and the fear of the Lord. We must make a choice. Which are we going to make room for in our lives: The fear of the Lord or things that are evil?

ADAPTED FROM DEREK PRINCE'S TEACHING: "THE LORD'S TREASURE: THE FEAR OF THE LORD." THIS MESSAGE WILL BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT EDITION OF THE TEACHING LEGACY OF DEREK PRINCE.

For Further Study

We recommend Derek's message available on CD:

Do You Fear God? #4302, \$8.00 (including Post and Handling)

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