



Maranatha Baptist Church
Equip University
Christian Living Track
Fearing and Following God

Class 2 – What is the Fear of God?

Introduction

“The basic idea behind the fear of the Lord, is much broader than our modern understanding of fear. While the holiness of God will leave many knees knocking when Jesus comes again, a mature fear of the Lord is more akin to awe, devotion, and worship. It is a response that says, ‘Your glory is irresistible.’ ‘In your presence, nothing else matters. You are all that I desire.’ Furthermore, it is a response that is active. It does something. It is not simply a passive devotion; it follows Christ in obedience. It searches out his will and can’t wait to do it.” Ed Welch, Addictions

Definition: Fear of God is reverent submission that leads to obedient trust and worship.

Who should fear God?

1. Everyone should (Psalm 33:8).
2. The wicked don’t (Psalm 36:1).
3. Everyone will (Romans 14:11).

Why should we fear God?

1. It’s His design (Genesis 1:26-27).
2. He’s worthy.
 - a. Ps. 2:10-11—It is at the heart of what it means to serve the Lord.
 - b. Ps. 89:7—He is more awesome than all that surround Him.
 - c. Ps. 90:11—His wrath is equal to the fear He deserves.
 - d. Ps. 27:1—The Lord is our salvation.

3. It's for our own good.
 - a. Ps. 111:10/Prov. 1:7—Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.
 - b. Ps. 115:11—He is a help and shield to those who fear Him.
 - c. Ps. 115:13—He will bless those who fear Him.
 - d. Ps. 118:4— Let those who fear the Lord say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Blessings found in fearing God:

- Ps. 23:4—Triumph over fear of evil
- Ps. 25:14—The Lord confides in those who fear Him.
- Ps. 27:3—Not fearing physical harm
- Ps. 31:19—God's goodness is poured out on those who fear Him.
- Ps. 33:18—The Lord's eyes are on those who fear Him.
- Ps. 34:4—Deliverance from lesser fears
- Ps. 34:9—Lacking nothing
- Ps. 103:11—The magnitude of His love for those who fear Him.
- Ps. 103:13—His Fatherly compassion is upon those who fear Him.
- Ps. 111:5—He provides food to those who fear Him.
- Ps. 130:4—There is forgiveness to those who fear Him.
- Ps. 145:19—Desires are fulfilled for those who fear Him.
- Ps. 147:11—The Lord delights in those who fear Him.
- Prov. 10:27—Adds length of life
- Prov. 15:33—Fear of the Lord teaches man wisdom.
- Prov. 16:6—A man avoids evil.
- Prov. 22:4—Results in wealth and honor and life

Why don't we fear God?

What happens when we don't fear God? (Genesis 3)

1. The worst exchange: we exchange *right* fear of God for fear of man and fear of God's wrath and judgment.
2. We alienate ourselves from God.
3. We alienate ourselves from each other.

How can we get it back?

1. The greatest sacrifice: Jesus dies on the cross as our substitute, receiving God's judgment for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2).
2. The greatest offer: Jesus offers His divine righteousness to sinners (Romans 3:24-26).
3. The greatest exchange: Those who believe in Jesus have their sin and guilt removed and receive Jesus' divine righteousness (Romans 4:5).

What does the fear of God look like in action?

- Ps. 22:23—They give praise.
- Ps. 66:16—They listen to truth.
- Ps. 76:8—They are quiet.
- Ps. 86:11—They are teachable and have an undivided heart.
- Ps. 119:63—They follow His precepts.
- Ps. 119:74—They hope in the Word.
- Ps. 119:79—They understand His statutes.
- Ps. 119:120—They stand in awe of God's laws.
- Ps. 128:1—They walk in His ways.
- Prov. 3:7—Not being wise in your own eyes (humility).
- Prov. 8:13—Hatred of evil
- Prov. 14:2—Their walk is upright.

How do we begin to put on the fear of the Lord?

1. Meditate on the gospel.
2. Study the character of God.
3. Repent of Pride (Prov. 3:7).

Conclusion

To fear God is to reverently submit to Him in such a way that leads to obedience and worship. It is to happily and joyfully obey Him.

Additional Resources:

- Ed Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*
- Lou Priolo, *Pleasing People: How not to be an Approval Junkie*
- Ed Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry and the God of Rest*
- John Murray, *The Fear of God: The Soul of Godliness*
- Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*
- Tony Payne & Philip Jensen, *Guidance and the Voice of God*
- James Petty, *Step By Step*

Class Outline:

1. What is the fear of man?
2. What is the fear of God?
3. How do we fear man? We fear that people will expose us.
4. How do we fear man? We fear that people will reject us.
5. How do we fear man? We fear that people will harm us.
6. A new vision for life: loving God and loving neighbor
7. Anxious or Restful?
8. God's Providence
9. God's Will
10. Faithfulness
11. Tools of the Trade Part 1: God's Word, Prayer, Counsel
12. Tools of the Trade Part 2: Circumstances and Feelings
13. Panel Discussion—Fearing and Following the Lord