

Subject: A Heart to Fear God

Scripture: Psalm 86:1-13

This psalm has many things to say about God's character, but for this message we will focus on verse 11, where the writer prays like this: "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." Let's take a close look at that. In this verse we find two requests and a commitment. The writer wants to know God's will and he wants a heart that fears God. He promises to walk in God's truth or live by God's truth. One of the best statements ever made about the Christian life is this: "God does business with people who mean business." It's true.

We have been looking into what the Bible says about fearing God. If we are going to fear God it must come from the heart. The problem is that our heart is not right.

1. The need for a new heart

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Romans 3:18 *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

Jeremiah 32:38-41 ³⁸ *And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:* ³⁹ *And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:* ⁴⁰ *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* ⁴¹ *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*

2. The need for a true heart

Matthew 15:8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.* They professed to know God and honor God, but their heart was not right, and it showed. It was obvious that the people did not fear God because they rejected Jesus as God's Son, the only Lord and Savior.

Look at **2 Kings 17:32-41** ³² *So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.* ³³ *They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.* ³⁴ *Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;* ³⁵ *With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:* ³⁶ *But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.* ³⁷ *And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.* ³⁸ *And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.* ³⁹ *But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.* ⁴⁰ *Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.* ⁴¹ *So these nations feared the*

LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

They were trying to live a double life. The LORD was the God of their lips, but not of their lives. As Paul wrote, they professed to know God, but in works they denied Him. It is hypocrisy when we profess to fear God on Sunday after we have served other gods all week.

3. The need for a teachable heart

Psalms 86:11 *Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.* We need to have a heart that is willing to learn and obey God's Word. You can't obey what you don't know, so the first step in obedience is to learn what God says.

We need for God to unite our heart to fear His name. To "unite" means to join, to become one, to be undivided. It means to focus our heart on God, to give Him our full attention, and have the deepest reverence for who He is. We need to learn who He is. We will never fear God until we know Him, and we will never know Him until we learn about Him in His Word. This is how He reveals Himself.

Look at the character of God in Psalm 86:5-10, 12-13, 15. Everything we know about God should cause us to fear Him.

- God is holy

1 Peter 1:15-16¹⁵ *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (conduct);*¹⁶ *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

2 Corinthians 7:1 *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Revelation 15:4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.*

- God is the judge

Psalms 76:7 *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*

Hebrews 10:31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

- God is all-powerful

Joshua 4:23-24²³ *For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:*²⁴ *That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.*

- God is good

1 Samuel 12:24 *Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.*

- God is forgiving

Psalms 130:3-4³ *If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* ⁴ *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

A heart that fears God is a new heart, a true heart, a teachable heart, and a humble and repentant heart.

4. The need for a humble and repentant heart

Isaiah 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Isaiah saw a vision of God high and lifted up in His heavenly temple. He heard the angels say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." Then Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am undone." He feared God and humbled himself.

"Unite my heart to fear thy name." Is that your prayer? Is your heart united, is it entirely focused on the Lord or is it divided between Him and other things?