

Short Takes: Fear God and Live

As interesting and as wise as King Solomon was, he seemed to spend much of his adult life as king chasing after one thing or another to find fulfillment and peace.

After he'd done everything he could think of he came back to the one thing that provides true peace and he recorded it for us in Ecclesiastes 12:13:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Throughout Scripture, we are reminded to *fear* God. Too many of us today think only of God's *love*, His *mercy* and His *grace*. While these things are clearly important they are not to be the only things we focus on.

Without a true *fear* of God, we will never draw close to God in our Christian walk. But what is meant by *fearing* God? It means a number of things:

- Reverential or profound respect
- Awe
- Seeing God's *perspective* concerning SIN

The authentic Christian never has to worry or fear being judged or experiencing God's wrath. Jesus submitted Himself to the Father's wrath in our place on the cross.

We should never fear that God will reject us or throw us into hell. This cannot happen for the Christian.

But imagine seeing God in His majesty, power and might. We have numerous examples of people coming into contact with God and falling over as though dead. Their fear of Him stemming from who God is was enough to cause them to faint.

We see this in Job and we see this in the apostle John.

Too many of us Christians today lack the profound respect and awe of God due Him. He is God. He is Creator. He is all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere at once.

Proverbs 1:7 declares, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.*" It is the starting place and without that, we can never really gain true knowledge of God that causes us to live lives that bring Him much glory.

Christianity today has become extremely easy to obtain. This "easy believism" tends to negate the fact that there must be a true commitment on our part to follow Him wherever He leads us.

The promises of God are often conditional. There is something we must do in order to gain God's perspective so that we can live as He wants us to live.

This all starts with learning to fear the Lord and it is not a once for all pursuit. It is something that we must learn to cultivate throughout our entire lives.

If we learn to fear God – which includes having a healthy, profound, reverential respect for Him and His commands – we will become recipients of His promises to us.

This is exactly why Paul tells us to “work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling* in Philippians 2:12. There is something we *must* do after we have received salvation and that something is to learn to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 14:27 makes the following promise to us:

“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.”

Our lives will *become* fountains of life IF we devote ourselves to learning to fear the Lord. It will also help us to avoid the things that try to kill us – namely the many sins we face daily.

We must become like Job who, after God responded to Job with questions Job was incapable of answering, Job's only response to God was:

“Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.”

God dearly loves us, but we need to realize and understand that we are *nothing* compared to Him. Without Him we are already dead. With Him, we will live forever.

We must cultivate the fear of the Lord and that is done by focusing on His Word and hiding it in our hearts. It is done by understanding that without a healthy fear of God we cannot progress in our Christian walk.

We desperately need to learn to fear the Lord. Ask Him to help you with that. He does NOT want us to condemn ourselves or to hang our heads in shame. He simply wants us to know and understand that God is all and we are merely His created beings. Yes, He loves us and we will experience that love in greater measure as we learn to have greater fear of Him in our lives.