

## Would You Know the Lord, Pt 1?

If you are like me, you desire to have a stronger, deeper relationship with God Almighty. I want to be clear in stating that I struggle to know God, just like you. I'm *not* an expert and never wish to give that impression. I'm *learning*.

God *wants* us to know Him, but only by the rules He has established. He set the standard in His Son by which we enter into relationship with Him. We either obey His rules through a right fear of Him or, through pride, we rebel against Him. This is where the rubber meets the road; in the daily living out of our lives in *fear* and *trembling*.

Why should we fear God who has openly shown us how much He loves us? Why should we fear this God who beckons us to come and welcomes us with His open arms? Why should we experience any sort of "trembling" as we approach His throne of grace?

The answer to all these questions is the same. We should fear Him because He is God Almighty, Maker of all Creation. He is above all. All things were made by Him for Him (**Colossians 1:16**). There is no other God.

I would like readers to be fully aware of the fact that I have *not* considered myself to have arrived by any stretch! I am *on the path* by God's grace. God is opening my stiff, blind eyes to the reality that without proper fear of Him, there can be no true *knowing* Him. Without a proper fearful attitude expressed toward God, my prayers to Him will not be answered. Without a healthy, profound, underlying foundation of growing fear of who God is along with His power, omniscience and everything else the Bible ascribes to Him, I simply will not grow in my relationship with Him.

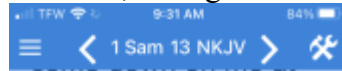
If your spirit within you cries out "AMEN!" to that, then know that you also are on the same path that promotes a foundation of fear and trembling within you.

### Lies of the New Age

The "new age" is really the *age-old lie* Satan first uttered to Eve in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden. Satan told Eve that she could gain "more" knowledge and be *like* God if she only disobeyed His strict order not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Certainly, she *did* gain more knowledge but it was not the way God wanted her or Adam to gain that knowledge. The New Age promises *gnosis* by ignoring God Himself because we are taught that we are all "gods," and we do not need God. Lucifer/Satan is adept at leading people *away* from God to rely on themselves. God draws us to Him but on His terms.

Every branch of the Charismatic Movement, Freemasonry, the New Age and all cults teach people to stoop to and rely on their *subjective feelings* to determine truth. Eve succumbed to Satan's lie because she *felt* the fruit of the forbidden tree promised something she wanted. Instead of *fearing* God and the retribution that came by rebelling against His command, she allowed her subjective feelings (lust), to guide her which gave birth to sin (**James 1:15**).

Once we, through our feelings, set God's Word aside, we walk in error and are out of fellowship



Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' **Therefore I felt compelled,** and offered a burnt offering."

**13** And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you.



with God, in spite of what our feelings may try to tell us. Our wills need to be in harmony with His will as revealed to our minds through His Word. This is only accomplished through a healthy fear of God. If not, we are nothing more than ships tossed about on the waves of the sea going wherever the waves and wind takes us (**Ephesians 4:14**). Paul states that Christians who live like this are mere "infants" but the goal is to become mature in Christ.

*The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death (**Proverbs 14:27**)*

*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate (**Proverbs 8:13**)*

*By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil (**Proverbs 16:6**)*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (**Proverbs 9:10**)*

Our *feelings* should not guide us. A growing *fear* of our LORD and God should guide us. The above verses say nothing about using our *feelings* to determine truth and everything about the benefits of rightly *fearing* God!

### Fear:

- is a fountain of life
- causes us to depart from the snares of death
- hates evil
- helps us depart from evil
- is the starting point for true wisdom and knowledge of God (the holy)

### Saul Felt Compelled

In **1 Samuel 13**, we learn of a horrible decision Saul made. While waiting for the prophet Samuel to arrive to offer a burnt offering, Samuel was delayed. Saul, instead of waiting, personally offered the burnt offering. Just after he finishes, Samuel arrives and asks King Saul what he had done.

Recall also King Uzziah also made a terrible mistake by wanting to personally offering incense inside the Temple on the altar. God punished Uzziah with leprosy, ensuring that he'd never be able to step inside the Temple of God again.

Notice what Saul says to Samuel.

...*I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering (1 Samuel 13:12)*

I've emphasized the word "felt" in the text because one that I heard often when I was involved in the Charismatic Movement. In fact, inside or outside of the Charismatic Movement, *felt* is still used in normal conversation to express a person's belief that God was the main reason they did or said something. They seem to have no fear that they could be mistaken.

**1 Samuel 13:12** tells us what is wrong when someone says they "felt" compelled to do or say something because God. It is due to a complete lack of fear (**Romans 3:18**). Saul *felt* as King, he could stand in Samuel's place as a priest. He was wrong and it cost him dearly. God rejected Saul.

### Prayer

This morning, I spent some time in prayer pleading with God that He would bless me with a greater, growing fear of Him. I have begun to realize that without the requisite fear of God, our lives as Christians will indeed suffer greatly. A right fear of God translates to a growing awareness of His holy Presence in our lives. I am *not* talking about what Brother Lawrence and his *Practicing the Presence of God* advocated. In that book, Lawrence delves deeply into a *mystical* experience that is not borne of Scripture but of his own *feelings*, which opened him up to the charades, suggestions and lies of the enemy of our soul. We will address this more in a future article.

What I'm actually referring to is a unique awareness of God that only comes through an intimate *fear* of Him; something every Christian should desire and seek *daily*. I conclude that we *cannot* actually learn to fear God *enough*, which is one of the messages of the book of Job. While we learn in chapter 1 that Job was blameless, righteous and feared God then, you can be sure he had a far greater and healthier fear of God by the end of the book!

Years ago, I worked at McDonald's while attending a junior college. One day, as I ran a cash register, a man walked in and I knew him immediately to be the manager of the entire area for that McDonald's. He traveled in a well-appointed bus all over the state and frequently checked in on how the various McDonald's restaurants were doing. Here I was waiting on this man. Do you think I was nervous and even fearful? You bet and I endeavored to do everything right according to McDonald's policies.

After he left, I breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed. But why? Wasn't every customer to McDonald's just as important as the man on whom I had just waited? Of course, but at the time, I didn't think of that. It's not that I treated regular customers without respect. It's just that I did not "fear" them the way I feared someone who could have me fired on the spot.

### Hezekiah

King Hezekiah is someone we learn about in **2 Chronicles 30** as someone who had a true heart for God. He re-established the Passover, sending messengers throughout Judah and Israel telling the people to come to the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. Sadly, not everyone in Israel was in favor of the idea.

So the couriers went from city to city through the country...but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. (**2 Chronicles 30:10** ESV)

Ultimately, these people mocked God Himself! Yet, many hearts throughout Israel were turned to the Lord and came to celebrate the Passover. It was a very good thing that Hezekiah did. At one point, we read that "*For a majority of the people...had not cleansed themselves yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed*" (**v 18**). Have you ever done that with the Lord's Supper or communion, when you just haphazardly take the bread and drink from the cup without truly thinking about the ramifications and whether or not you have unconfessed sin in your life? I have.

But King Hezekiah does something wonderful here.

*For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, 'May the good LORD pardon everyone who sets his heart to seek God, the LORD, the God of his fathers, even though not according to the sanctuary's rules of cleanness. (vv 18-19)*

**Verse 20** tells us the LORD heard Hezekiah's prayer. This is absolute proof that a right heart before God is far more important to Him than going through the motions even if those motions are "correct." God sees the heart, the seat of what motivates us.

But there came a time in Hezekiah's life when he became proud and stopped fearing God. It is as simple and profound as that. When God told him to prepare for his death, Hezekiah begged God to let him live. God relented and answered that prayer (**2 Chronicles 32**), and almost immediately two bad things happened. First, he bragged to visitors regarding the wealth of his kingdom and his son Manasseh became king after Hezekiah passed. Manasseh was a horrible king.

The reason "*pride goeth before destruction*" (**Proverbs 16:18**), is due solely to the fact that pride replaces *fear*. The two cannot coexist. Either your fear of God will drive you to your knees or your pride will push you away from Him. Which lives in you? Which lives in me? We cannot have both. We either want to live in fear of the Lord or we will live in proud ignorance.

I believe especially in these days of growing evil and corruption, we do not need to fear any of it. Instead we should fear God in endeavoring to live a life that pleases Him through our constant submission to Him in all things. You can submit to Him because you "have to" or because you desperately "want to." You can also ignore Him and try to get by on your own wits.

Gas shortage? God will provide. Food shortage? God will provide. Anarchy throughout the USA? God will guard. *The* prerequisite on our part is to *fear* Him by approaching Him in a manner that proves to Him we highly esteem Him, we cherish His love and guidance and we desire above all things to be faithful to Him in whatever He allows to come our way.

Would you know God? *Fear Him.*

We will be back next time with the biblical ways that help us gain more of an appropriate fear within us, beyond simply *praying* that God will grow that fear. That is absolutely needful, but there is more to it than prayer only.