

Subject: *The Wisdom of Fearing God*

Scripture: *Proverbs 1:7*

What's wrong with this world and why is it so evil? What's wrong with the church and why is it so worldly? The answer is found in the Bible. Many people have no fear of God. They don't fear God because they don't know Him. They don't know Him because they don't know what the Bible says about Him. People may say they know Him but they don't fear Him because they have a false god. They have made a god to suit themselves. In Romans 3 Paul describes the ungodly world. He begins by saying "there is none righteous, no not one" and then we find the summary statement in verse 18. **Romans 3:18** *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

The Bible says the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom. Many people who are incredibly intelligent are actually the biggest fools. The Bible says the fear of God is linked to knowing God. **Proverbs 9:10** *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* The Bible says that a fool says in his heart there is no God. But whoever says there is a God but I don't fear Him is also a fool. He may claim that he fears God, but does his life back that up? We're going to examine that in this message. We are going to think about the subject of fearing God in this message: the priority of fearing God, the people who fear God, and the practice of fearing God.

1. The priority of fearing God

The fear of God is a dominant theme in Scripture and it is in the Old and New Testaments. There are over 150 clear references to the fear of God. Fearing God is not optional. It is not for a few super saints. It is for all people everywhere.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14¹³ *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*¹⁴ *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

These verses help to define what it means to fear God. The fear of God is the awareness that the one true and living God is with us, He is watching us, and He is the God who will judge every thought, word, and deed, and He alone has the authority to condemn us or save us.

The fear of God is not limited to the Old Testament. It is also in the New Testament. God is to be feared in all ages because His nature does not and cannot change.

Acts 9:31 *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.*

2. The people who fear God

When Moses needed helpers to oversee the people of Israel and fill the role of judges, these were the requirements, **Exodus 18:21** *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

Moses spoke of the importance of fearing God and obeying His Word, **Deuteronomy 5:29** *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

Deuteronomy 6:23-24²³ *And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.*²⁴ *And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.*

Many times the nation rebelled and turned from God, but there was always a faithful remnant. **Malachi 3:16** *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

Joseph feared God. Job feared God. Jesus taught us to fear God.

Matthew 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Psalms 119:63 *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* You are known by the company you keep.

3. The practice of fearing God

Fearing God is more than a Bible study. It is a way of life. If we fear God it will show in the way we live our life and the way we serve God.

Philippians 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* This is not the fear that you might lose salvation, but that you might misuse it.

Hebrews 12:28-29²⁸ *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*²⁹ *For our God is a consuming fire.* The word translated “reverence” is the same word used to describe Noah.

Hebrews 11:7 *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Nothing about God is trivial. God is serious and we should take Him seriously.

1 Peter 1:17-19¹⁷ *And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*¹⁸ *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*¹⁹ *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

The turning point in salvation is when we begin to fear God. John Newton, *Amazing Grace*, “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. Remember the two thieves? Only one was saved. What was the turning point? He realized he was dying and he faced the judgment of God. He asked the other thief, “Don’t you fear God?” That’s the question I want to ask you: Do you fear God? How does fearing God affect the way you live?