

Why Fear a Redeemer?

Holy Living Part 2

1 Peter 1:17-18 6-3-2012

Summary: The third command in the book is to live in fear (the good kind, that makes you withdraw from sin, not the bad kind, that makes you withdraw from God). We will face judgment for our deeds, good and bad, on Judgment Day, and we also face judgment in the form of chastisement in this life. Both should affect our behavior. And the massive size of the redemption price should make us afraid to return to bondage.

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1 Peter 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. 18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the worthless way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Fear the Judge

The Third Command

Today we come to the third command in the book of 1 Peter. The first one was live in hope. The second was live in holiness. Today we see the third, and this one may come as a shock - live in fear.

17 If you call on a Father who judges impartially based on each one's work, live out the time of your temporary residence here in fear.

Live in hope, live in holiness, live in fear. Nobody minds that first message. I could preach about hope all day long and I would not make any enemies. The sermon on holiness probably made a few folks uncomfortable. God requires that we be set apart from this world, set apart from sin, righteous and holy in absolutely every area of life. That is obviously not as popular a message as the one about living in hope. But this third one? Live in fear? That is about as psychologically incorrect as it gets.

And some would say it is not only psychologically incorrect; it is religiously incorrect. Even in much of the church culture the idea of fearing God is anathema. The word fear is redefined to mean reverence or awe, not actual fear... because the idea of being afraid of God is very distasteful to many Christians. And on the surface it seems like they might have a point here in 1 Peter 1. Peter has been going on and on about living a life of hope in God. How can a life of fear possibly be compatible with a life of hope? And didn't John say that perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn.4:18)?

Fear Means Fear

And yet – there is really just no getting around the fact that the word means fear. It is the normally, everyday Greek word for being afraid of things. And it is not like this is some vague, obscure passage that is out of step with the rest of Scripture. There are many, many times God's Word calls us to fear Him – Old and New Testaments. Sometimes people claim that fearing God was an Old Testament thing, and now that Christ has come and we are sons of God, fearing God is a thing of the past. The problem is – this passage is in the New Testament. So is 1 Peter 2:17 which commands us, **...fear God, honor the king.** So is Ephesians 5:21 **Submit to one another in fear of Christ.** 2 Corinthians 5:11 is also in the New Testament, and it says: **Since we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.**

Acts 9:31 Then the church ... was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Acts 19:17 they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

2 Corinthians 7:1 ... let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness in fear of God.

Philippians 2:12 ... work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

Luke 12:4-5 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

That is just a sampling – the New Testament is loaded with commands to fear God. Fear of God is mentioned well over one hundred times in Scripture, and God is the object of fear far more often in Scripture than all other objects put together.

And not only does God require all people to fear Him, but He forbids us to fear anyone or anything else.

Isaiah 8:12-13 do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. 13 The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread

Fearing someone other than God is tantamount to forgetting the Lord.

Isaiah 51:12,13 Who are you that you fear mortal men...13 that you forget the LORD?

Good Fear Bad Fear

Some people have a hard time with the idea of fearing God because they think of it as being like their fear of an impossible-to-please father who abused them or who was angry all the time. That would be an evil kind of fear of God. There is most definitely a wrong way to fear God. The wicked, lazy servant of Matthew 25:25 who buried his talent in the ground because he was afraid of his master's harshness had that kind of fear. James 1:5 says God is the type who gives generously to all without finding fault. God is not a fault-finding, grouchy, grumpy, harsh, impossible-to-please father. And if you fear Him in that way, that dishonors Him.

And if you are wondering, “How do I know if I’m fearing Him the wrong way?” just look at the effect your fear has on your life. The wicked, lazy servant in Matthew 25 was lazy precisely because he had that bad kind of fear. Mark this: Any time your fear pushes you toward laziness, disobedience, or reluctance to draw near to God; that is the bad kind of fear.

Good Kind

There is, however, a different kind of fear – a good kind. This is the passage where God comes down on the mountain and begins speaking to the people, and they are all terrified. And here is what they say:

Exodus 20:19 they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

They have a kind of fear that causes them to want to withdraw from the presence of God. And Moses tells them not to have that kind of fear.

20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid..."

Do not fear God with that kind of fear. But then look what he goes on to say:

... God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

There is the good kind of fear. Both kinds are in the same verse. The goal is for you not to be afraid, but for the fear of God to be with you. Do not be afraid with the bad kind of fear that pushes you away from God, but instead have the fear of the Lord that will **keep you from sinning**. The bad kind pushes you away from God; the good kind pushes you away from sin.

Compatible with Hope?

But that still leaves us with the question - how can a life of fear possibly be compatible with a life of hope? Aren't hope and fear mutually exclusive emotions? I think they probably are, but fear is an interesting thing, because it is possible to fear something in general without actually feeling afraid. For example, we all have a healthy fear of falling, which is why we are careful around cliffs. But there is a difference between that generalized fear of falling, and the feeling of terror you have when it seems like you are about to fall. If I see a cliff a half mile away, I don't feel any emotions of fear, because there is not any danger that I could slip and fall off a cliff that is a half mile away. But if I am approaching the cliff for some reason, and the terrain is steep and slippery and I lose my footing – now I have the emotion of fear because it seems likely now that I am going to actually fall. So the generalized fear of falling is always present, but the emotion only hits when it seems like it is about to happen.

In fact, it is that generalized fear that keeps us from getting into positions where it is likely to happen. The generalized fear makes me careful so that I do not get too close to the cliff. That is what it is designed to do. Fear is kind of like pain, but better. Pain is a great gift from God because without pain we would destroy ourselves. You lean on a hot stove, and God gave you the gift of pain so that you will immediately jerk your hand away to prevent any serious damage. But now that that has happened once, in the future you prevent the serious damage even without the pain, because now you are afraid of hot stoves. And that fear causes you to avoid touching them. So fear gives you the benefits of pain without having to actually feel the pain. The great majority of suffering that comes our way we never even have to undergo because fear causes us to avoid it.

So fearing something in that generalized sense does not require that you actually feel the emotion of fear constantly. I fear hot stoves, but when I am near one I do not experience the emotion of fear, because I know I am going to avoid touching it. So I can fry an egg without any emotion of terror at all – because of my fear of hot stoves. Your fear of head-on collisions kept you in your lane on the way to

church today, and as a result, you probably were not sweating or shaking or even thinking about the danger because your generalized fear of it has trained you to avoid that danger.

So living in fear of God does not mean trembling and shaking and feeling emotions of horror and dread twenty-four hours a day. You only feel the emotions of fear when you are likely to suffer His judgment. And the more you fear God the less that happens, because you take the consequences of offending God so seriously that you will do anything to avoid it. And as long as you are avoiding it, there is nothing to be afraid of.

When my kids were little they had a healthy fear of their dad. They would never mouth off to me or speak disrespectfully, because they were afraid of the consequences of that. The consequences were swift and severe, and they learned very quickly that it was not worth it. But were they living in constant terror? Not at all. Their generalized fear kept them from doing the things that would bring discipline. The other day I was watching some of our old home videos, and in every video the kids and I are having a big pillow fight, or we are wrestling around on the floor or playing in the yard or having a snowball fight and everybody is laughing and smiling and having a great time, and the kids are not the slightest bit hesitant to approach me. They are climbing all over me, smacking me in the head with their pillow, throwing snowballs at me – as relaxed around me as they could be. Why? Because their fear of discipline kept them from doing things that would bring discipline.

The good kind of fear of God does not make you reluctant to approach Him, it makes you reluctant to dishonor Him. And the reason it makes you reluctant to dishonor Him is because you so strongly desire to approach Him. You fear His displeasure because you love His presence. And the more you love Him, the more terrifying the thought of His displeasure is.

Fear What? Judgment

Every Christian parent should be striving to raise their children in such a way that when their kids grow up and read about loving and fearing God at the same time, it makes perfect sense to them. Kids that grow up with permissive parenting will have a tough time understanding the fear of God. And kids that grow up in a harsh household will understand fear but will struggle with loving God and desiring to draw near to Him. We need to raise our kids in a way that makes the combination of both make sense. A child should have a generalized fear of his father that keeps him from disobedience, and at the same time a love for his father that makes him want to be close to his dad.

So the image of a father should include both love and fear, however Peter is not satisfied with just that image. Our fear of God must go beyond just the kind of fear a kid has for his dad's discipline.

17 Since you call on a Father who judges impartially based on each one's work

The one we call our Father also happens to be the Judge. We must live in fear of God because He is going to judge us. And He is going to judge us impartially. There is not a lower standard for us just because we are His children. All men and women will be judged according to the same standard.

Judgment Day

“When is that going to happen? Is this talking about Judgment Day – or judgment in this life?”
Will believers have to stand before God on Judgment Day? Absolutely.

Romans 14:10 ... we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

He is talking there about believers, and he quotes Isaiah 45:23, which speaks about how all the nations will face God on Judgment Day. We who are believers will be in that judgment.

According to deeds

Some people have said, “Yeah, but we won’t really be judged based on our works. We will only be judged based on whether our name is in the book of life.” The problem with that is Peter specifically says, **the one we call on as Father judges each man’s work impartially.** We are not saved by doing good works; we are saved through faith alone. However the evidence that you have saving faith is your works. So if God examines your deeds on Judgment Day and finds righteous deeds, those righteous deeds will not save you, but they will serve as the evidence that you have faith. And if you have faith, then Jesus’ perfect righteousness will be credited to your account, and that will save you. So people who claim to have faith but are not living a righteous life are in for a horrible shock on Judgment Day, because the judgment will be based on works.

Romans 2:6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

In Matthew 25 everyone is gathered before the throne for judgment, and each person is either condemned to hell or invited to heaven based on their love or lack of love for believers.

1 Corinthians 3:12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. 16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him

Including Bad Deeds

Some people have said, “Well, maybe we will be judged on our good works for the sake of determining rewards, but not on our sins.” But that does not work either because of passages like 2 Corinthians 5:9.

2 Corinthians 5:9 So we make it our goal to please him ... 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

We will receive what is due us for our good deeds and for our bad ones. And there will be consequences for the bad ones. And the fear of those consequences controls the way we live. Look again at the connection between verses 9 and 10.

2 Corinthians 5:9 we make it our goal to please him ...10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ

The fact that we will face judgment causes us to strive harder after pleasing God.

And it also increases our energy in evangelism – for two reasons. First, because when you fear God’s judgment, that fear actually generates compassion for people who will suffer God’s full wrath on that Day. Look at verse 11.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ... 11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.

The reason we try to persuade men to become Christians is because we fear God's judgment ourselves, and therefore we really feel for those people who are on a fast track toward actually suffering that judgment.

So this fear motivates us to share the gospel with the lost out of compassion. And secondly it motivates us to share the gospel because we do not want to have to answer to God for why we failed to share the gospel.

Proverbs 24:11 Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. 12 If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?

If we fail to rescue the people around us staggering toward eternal destruction we will not be able to claim innocence on Judgment Day.

Judgment in this Life

So, will believers have to give an account for their sins on Judgment Day? Yes. Believers will be there on Judgment Day just like everyone else – and that should have an effect on our behavior. However, there are some people who have suggested that Peter is not talking about Judgment Day, but rather about judgments that we might receive in this life for our sins.

1 Corinthians 11:29-32 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

So the discipline we receive in this life is a form of judgment. If you judge yourself and repent, you can avoid the disciplinary judgment of God in some cases, but if you do not, there is a kind of temporal judgment that you can face.

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God

Hebrews 12 talks about that discipline type judgment in some detail (Heb.12:5-11). And the last verse in that section says it is unpleasant (to say the least!), but it produces a harvest of righteousness in those who are trained by it. In Revelation 2 the Lord Jesus Christ approaches His churches with a sword (2:12), which symbolizes judgment, and then says things like this:

Revelation 2:23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

So which kind of judgment is Peter talking about here? Those who say it is talking about judgment in this life will point to the fact that Peter uses the present tense. He does not say, "Since you call on a Father who will judge each man's work..."

He says Since you call on a Father who judges impartially based on each one's work

So the fact that he does not use the future tense may indicate that he is talking about the ongoing judgments in this life in the sense of chastisement and discipline. But it is also possible that it is a gnomic idea where Peter is just saying, "This is the way God is. He judges. And for that reason, live in fear." And in that case it would gather in both judgment in this life and on Judgment Day.

All Sin is the Lack of the Good Kind of Fear

However you take it, the bottom line is this – fear of God as judge should keep us from sin. All of our sin is the result of a lack of the good kind of fear of God. We just do not take the threat of

judgment seriously. When we think, “I know this is wrong, but I’ll do it anyway,” what we are saying is, “The discipline, if there is any, will not be any big deal. I’m not afraid of it.” And if you are not afraid of God’s rod – the threat of his chastisement does not motivate you to resist sin – that is unbelief. God’s Word says the consequences of sin will be severe enough to where it will not be worth it – ever. There has never, ever, ever been a single time when someone sinned and got pleasure or profit or some other benefit from the sin that was worth what that sin ended up costing the person. Is that statement true? It sure does not seem like it, does it? Some people have gotten huge amounts of pleasure from sins and did not seem to have any consequence to speak of. Some have made massive profits from a sin and just got off scot-free. Some people have divorced without grounds and left their spouse in abject poverty, and the sinful spouse goes on to marry someone else and lives happily ever after. That statement I made that sin is never worth it – that statement is not always true ... *in this life*.

If all you do is look at this life, sin really does pay off sometimes. But this life is not all there is – it is not even the main thing there is – what really matters are the hundred trillion millennia that come after this life. Of course injustice will stand – if you do not take into consideration Judgment Day. But if you do consider Judgment Day, no injustice will stand, which means no sin will ever end up being worth it. The consequence for every sin will be so severe that if we could see that consequence at the moment of temptation, we would immediately lose interest in that sin. It is *never* worth it.

And if it seems to you like some sin is worth it, that is a failure to understand the nature of God. You need to increase your understanding of what the Lord Jesus Christ is really like because the more you know Him the more you will fear Him in a way that will keep you from sinning.

So the three commands – living in hope, live in holiness, live in fear – are not contradictory at all. They all go together. If you live in hope of all God’s great and precious promises, that causes you to have a fear of jeopardizing your share in those promises. Not a constant emotional terror that drives you away from God, but a healthy, generalized fear of judgment that causes a retreat from sin. And that retreat from sin is holiness – separation from sin. Hope causes fear, and fear produces holiness.

Fear the Redeemer

So the question is, how do you increase your fear of God? If you know the threats of chastisement and giving an account on Judgment Day should terrify you, but they just don’t, then what? How do you increase the good kind of fear? Peter is going to help us with that in the next two verses – and it is not at all what you would expect. Verse 17 – Live in fear of God. Why?

Redemption

18 because you know that it was not with perishable things, such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the worthless way of life inherited from your fathers 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb, without blemish and spotless – the blood of Christ.

The knowledge that will cause us to be able to have this fear is the knowledge of the massive price that was paid to redeem us. The word *redeem* means to be freed from captivity by the payment of a price. We do not use that word in our culture because we do not have slavery, so a better translation would probably be ransom. When someone is kidnapped and held for ransom, you can free that person from captivity by the payment of a ransom. That is exactly what this word means. In fact it was used that way in ancient times. If someone was captured in war, and the captors demanded a price for his release (a ransom), they used this word “redeem” to describe that.

So you and I were in captivity, and God paid a ransom to free us. That is redemption. You may have heard the story of the little boy who worked all summer to build a toy sail boat with his dad, and after he finally got the mast up and the sails, and painted it, he took it out to the lake to sail it. And as

he was playing with it a big gust of wind came up and took it out toward the middle of the lake and out of sight. And he never did find it.

Some weeks later he was walking in front of a little shop and he sees, in the window, his little boat! He tells the storekeeper that it is his, but to no avail. The storekeeper says, "If you want it you'll have to pay the full price." So the boy goes home, breaks open his piggy bank, and has just enough to buy the boat. He buys the boat and brings it home and says, "Now this boat is twice mine. I made it, and now I bought it." That is exactly what God says of us. He made us, we were lost to Him, and then He bought us back again. And now we are twice His.

Our Captivity - Worthless way of life handed down from the fathers

But in what sense were we lost? What kind of captivity were we in that required this ransom price? Look at verse 18.

18 ... you were redeemed (ransomed) from the worthless way of life inherited from your fathers

Peter does an interesting thing there. That phrase **inherited from your fathers** is actually just one word in the Greek. And it was phrase that was always used in a very positive sense. The way of life handed down from the fathers referred to something that was venerated and held in very high regard by both Greek and Jewish cultures as the thing that gave stability to society. It is what kept society from unraveling. So it was a term that had a very positive flavor – a lot like the English word *heritage*. When someone says, "That's your heritage," typically they are referring to something good, not something bad. This word was the same way. In fact I read one scholar who said Peter is probably the first writer to ever use the word in a negative sense.¹

Way of life

That phrase **way of life** is also one word. It refers not just to conduct, but to the values, norms, commitments, and conduct that make up a way of life. So this wonderful heritage handed down from the fathers that is the stability of society itself – Peter says, "That kidnapped you." We were enslaved and in bondage to it, with no way of escape.

This world has a certain way of doing things. It is based on self-preservation, self-esteem, self-worth, and the fulfillment of the desires of the flesh. And those desires are messed up royally, because they are desires for things that will not even ultimately satisfy. And we found last week that it is because of ignorance about God. But there is no way out of that ignorance because as long as you are being held prisoner, your heart is unwilling to accept the truth even if someone gives it to you. So you have absolutely no way of freeing yourself from this captivity. You are hopelessly enslaved to corrupt desires that are based on ignorance about God, and there is no way out – unless someone pays the ransom and frees you.

And if you are a believer, that is exactly what happened. God paid that ransom, the chains fell off, and now you are free! It is like the verse in "And Can it Be":

**Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
fast bound in sin and nature's night**

My spirit was imprisoned for so long – bound in sin and darkness. But then...

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray

In old English "quicken" means life-giving. God looked at me in a way that gave life to my spirit.

¹ Jobes 118.

**I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.**

That is one of the greatest hymns ever written. Another great song for celebrating your freedom is Matt Redmond's song, "No Chains on Me." I love that song because he is just shouting in celebration:

**God, You raise me up, up from the grave
The cross before, I'm on my way
My heart is free, no chains on me!**

The Size of the Price

So God freed us, and He did it by paying a price, and that price becomes the focus of what Peter wants to talk about. First he tells us what it is not.

18 because you know that it was not with perishable things, such as silver or gold that you were redeemed

He picks the most valuable, durable, long-lasting treasures we know of and says, "It wasn't anything cheesy like that." Gold is perishable. Of all the things in this world that get moldy or rusty or decay or fall apart – gold is one of the most imperishable things we have. But Peter says, "No – it's perishable. It doesn't even make it past Judgment Day." So Peter is saying, "The price of your redemption wasn't something worthless, like the most valuable treasure in the whole world. It's worth so much more than that."

Precious Blood

19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb, without blemish and spotless – the blood of Christ.

Now, don't lose sight of Peter's logic that started back in verse 17. He said, "Live in fear of God" – why? Because of the preciousness of the redemption price. Does that make sense to you? Live in fear because the price was so massive and so perfect?

Why does the size of the redemption price even matter? Suppose you went down to Mexico and were abducted, and the kidnappers sent word to your wife that they were demanding a \$10 million ransom. And your wife is the garage sale queen, and she starts haggling with them and gets them all the way down to \$50. What does the price matter to you? Fifty million or fifty cents – either way – you're free! You were in hopeless captivity, and now you are free as a bird – what does the price matter?

It matters because the issue here is not mainly your freedom. The issue here is your relationship with the one who bought your freedom. And so the price does matter, because the higher the price, the more this whole ransom thing is a factor in our relationship with the one who paid the ransom.

In the year 1253 Sir Grimbaldus de Pauncefort married Lady Constantia Lingayn, who was famous for her stunning beauty. Grimbaldus fought in the Crusades, and was captured by the Moors at the battle of Tunis. The captors demanded as a ransom price a joint from his beautiful wife. Without hesitation she called a doctor to cut off her left hand between the wrist and the elbow and had it sent to the captors. She survived the horrific operation and her husband was released and they were reunited. Let me ask you this – how seriously do you think Grimbaldus took his freedom after that? Do you think that had an impact on their relationship?

And let me ask you this – do you think after that Grimbaldus was maybe a little more careful when he fought against the Moors? What kind of impact do you think it would have on his wife if after a few weeks of freedom he decided to go back to Tunis and voluntarily place himself back in captivity?

Understanding the redemption price does two things: It has a major impact on your relationship with the one who redeemed you, and It teaches you something about the seriousness of your captivity. If you could spring me for \$50, I really was not in all that much trouble. But if bail is set at \$50 million – that tells me I was in deep trouble. And if all the silver and gold in the world would not be enough to set me free – what does that say about how severe my problem was?

How Does that Increase Fear?

So what does all that have to do with fear? I can see how it could increase my love or increase my gratitude, but how does it increase my fear? This is one of those sermons I am afraid we have to cut off right in the middle, because of time. There is so much richness to this, it is going to require an in-depth explanation. For now let me just call your attention to what you probably already feel intuitively. Do you have a sense that returning to your captivity should strike fear in your heart because of the size of the redemption price? Your Redeemer is not your wife, He is your Judge. And it was not His left hand – it was the life of His Son. Living an unholy life - after the pattern of our old life – is a denial of the preciousness of Jesus' blood, which should strike terror in the heart of anyone who loves God as Father and fears Him as Judge.

Benediction: Psalm 2:11-12 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

1:25 Questions

1. Do you ever struggle with the bad kind of fear of God (fear that makes you withdraw from Him)? If so, what could you do to correct your conception of God's nature that causes the wrong kind of fear?
2. What could you do to increase the good kind of fear of God – so that chastisement and giving an account on Judgment Day really do motivate you to resist unholiness?