The True Meaning of Fearing the Lord

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> *Discover the true meaning of fearing the Lord through a personal journey of discipline, uncovering how divine reverence and God's omnipresence transform a believer's daily walk.*

WHEN I was young, I feared my mother! I saw how she whipped my older brother one day, and immediately signed up on her team. I did not dare be on the opposing team! Despite being on her team, I also had my share of spanking whenever I did something wrong.

Today I look back at how my mother disciplined us and I am very grateful that she did not spare the rod. Proverbs 13:24 says, *"He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."* If there is any discipline in me, it is because my mother did not allow me to self-destruct.

This foundation of discipline eventually led me to explore the **true meaning of fearing the Lord**, a concept rooted in **divine reverence** rather than terror. By understanding **God's omnipresence**, we move away from a "policeman" view of the Creator and into a deeper, more honoring relationship with a Father who is slow to anger and abundant in mercy.

The Misconception of the "Disciplinarian"

With my childhood experiences as a foundation, when I gave my life to Jesus Christ and started to hear that we should "fear God," I was confused. I immediately formed in my mind an image of a God who was a strict disciplinarian. I imagined Him looking out only for the wrong things I did so that He could punish me.

It took years of teaching and discipleship to realize that God is a loving Father who is *"Slow to anger and abundant in love and mercy"* (Psalm 103:8). The fear I felt as a child was based on the avoidance of pain, but the fear I was called to as a believer was based on the recognition of a Holy God.

What is the Fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord is recognizing His **omnipresence**—the fact that He is everywhere at the same time. It is the realization that there is nothing I can hide from Him, and no place I can go where He does not see me.

Psalm 139:7-12 provides the ultimate scriptural backdrop for this:

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me... even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you."

Unfortunately, people who do not fear the Lord live as though God does not see the things they do. They live as though God is not serious about His commandments. On the other hand, people who truly fear the Lord live as though God is there with them wherever they go and in whatever they do.

A person that does not fear God disregards **Hebrews 4:13**: *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* Disobedience to the Word of God from a lack of fear will always bring trouble on us. If we sow sin, we will reap trouble.

Reverence and Honor: Beyond the Spanking

The other vital meaning for the fear of the Lord is showing **reverence and honor** to Him. We do this by taking seriously the commands He has given us in His Word.

For example, the Word of God tells us to honor His sanctuary: *"...Have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord"* (Leviticus 19:30).

Consider our modern church behavior. How many of us chew gum or catch up on our WhatsApp messages while the sermon is being preached? How many of us dress indecently when going to God's sanctuary? I often ask myself: *Would I do the same thing if I were in the presence of the President?* If we would show more outward respect to an earthly leader than to the King of Kings, we have lost the fear of the Lord.

Departing from Self-Wisdom

True fear leads to the departure from evil. **Proverbs 3:7** warns us: *"Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."* When we are "wise in our own eyes," we think we can sin in the dark and get away with it. We think our logic is superior to God's law. But a heart of reverence understands that the eyes of the Lord are always upon us, not to "catch" us, but because

He is a Holy God who dwells with His people.

Let the fear and reverence for God be the hallmark of our lives as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the beginning of wisdom, the guardrail of our character, and the foundation of our peace.

Prayer Points

1). Ask the Lord to forgive you for the times when you have feared man instead of fearing God.

2). Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what the fear of the Lord is, so that you do not bring trouble on yourself.

3). Thank the Lord that through Christ Jesus, He does not treat us as our sins deserve.