

Motivated by Holy Fear: Exploring the affects of God's Rightful Rule and Reign

What motivates you? In this breakout we'll learn about the true character of God and why He is worthy of our trust & reverence. It's this Biblical fear which motivates us to real worship, obedience, and Gospel advancement.

Introduction

- Fear of God is a thread connecting Genesis to Revelation in Scripture
- Most frequent command in Scripture is: _____
- More than 150 references to the fear of God in the Bible.
- *"Fear is a curious and powerful emotion. It can debilitate. Fear can stop our mind, shut our mouth, and stay our hand. Yet fear can also set us into action. As much as fear keeps us from taking risks and being effective, fear can also be an incredible motivator."* Elliot Clark

Powerful Influence

- Today's culture and society revolves around fear—we are _____.
- We have even created the acronym FOMO
- Fear is a powerful emotion, causing a great affect on our lives.
- God cares about us having the right motivation when it comes to fuel.
- Our culture has lost God as the _____ of fear- Michael Reeves

Table Discussion Question:

What sin are we prone to struggle with that *might* find its source in fear (other than God)?

What is the fear of God?

The fear of the Lord is beginning of 1. _____ (Proverbs 1:7)
2. _____ (Proverbs 9:10)

"In reality this is where true knowledge begins. The person who knows God and fears Him possesses something more valuable than all the combined knowledge of philosophy and science put together." Jerry Bridges, The Joy of Fearing God.

There are two different kinds of fear:

1. _____ -- (Servile Fear) --fear that a slave would likely feel toward a harsh or intimidating master. Or a lieutenant receiving intense orders from his sergeant.
 - This type of fear is rooted in punishment and condemnation- 1 John 4:18; Romans 8:1
 - Christians are susceptible to experiencing this kind of fear in relationship with God, if we don't fully understand the grace of God and the gift of his Son, Jesus.
 - Drives you away from God, not to Him.

2. _____ -- (Filial Fear)—fear that of a child toward his father. “...that indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, pleasure, joy and awe which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what he has done for us.” Sinclair Ferguson

- This is only experienced when we begin to see God as more than a Creator, but as a Father.
- This kind of fear is one that captivates our hearts and brings glory to God in word and deed.

Punishment vs. Discipline?

_____ is a likely fruit to servile fear of God.

1. Unbiblical.
2. Opens the door to works-based faith in salvation disregarding justification.
3. Example of this found in Genesis 12:10-20

_____ is a fruit of filial fear of God.

1. Biblical.
2. Produces godly character, in alignment with Hebrews 12:11
3. Example of this found in light of King David’s with Bathsheba in Psalm 51

“The fear of God is the soul of godliness”- John Murray, Scottish theologian, and Professor.

Definition of the fear of God: _____ in awe at the character of God, as we taste and see His _____ in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Table Discussion Questions:

Does my fear of God tend to be more “slavish” in nature—viewing him as someone who is never pleased and looking to punish us? What evidence of this is in your life?

Or “fatherly” in nature— viewing him as someone who is gentle and firm, offering discipline when needed? What evidence of this is in your life?

Feeble hearts that wonder

1. The nature of man’s heart does not fear God (Jeremiah 17:5-10; 1 Corinthians 10:6-14; Exodus 20:20).

“Any dominating desire of the heart that replaces the desire to love and serve God foremost, is an idol...a heart idol will demand worship (1 Corinthians 10:6-14).” John Street, *Passions of the Heart*

2. God knows our hearts and offers change (Prov. 16:2; 21:2; Psalm 31:19)
3. Change is found in the nature of God himself.
 - God is Holy (Isaiah 6:3).
 - God is full of compassion and slow to anger (Psalm 15:8).
 - God is jealous (Exodus 34:14).
 - The life-giving fountain (Proverbs 14:27).
4. Our Response?
 - Delight and fear (Psalm 112:1; Neh. 1:11; Psalm 2:11; Prov. 28:14)
 - “The fear of the Lord is a pleasure to believers, for it is about enjoying his fearfully lovely glory.” Michael Reeves

Table Discussion Questions:

When was the last time that you trembled and were in awe of who God is, or what He has done for you?

How can this become a normal experience for you in your personal life with Christ? What needs to change?

Blessings and benefits when the fear of God reigns and rules in our hearts

“The emotions and attitude should determine the way we relate to God—the way we obey Him, trust Him, and worship Him. Properly fearing God is more than just a feeling or attitude—it’s a feeling or attitude *that changes our lives.*” Bridges

Holy fear is good, and it changes us!

1. Humility is cultivated.
2. We tremble and rejoice in who God is and what He has done on our behalf.
3. Protection from other heart idols, which our hearts seek to replace in fear of God.
4. God-glorifying motivation overflowing into the lives of unbelievers (so that they, too, may experience the fear of the Lord).

The fear of God deserves to reign as primary in our _____.

So, now what?

1. God’s Word leads us to godliness (2 Peter 3:1-3)
2. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12-13)
3. Faithful in our worship and witness (Matthew 20:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20)

Personal reflection questions:

1. What specific characteristics or attributes of God cultivate a holy and reverential fear of God in you?
2. Do you sometimes indulge in sinful actions or thoughts because you do not have a proper regard for God's fatherly discipline? What needs to change? What needs to be repented of?
3. As you inwardly reflect on personal sin (especially sexual sin), how has misplaced fear potentially kept you enslaved to that sin?
4. Discerning sorrow over personal sin. God's word reveals our hearts motivations (Hebrews 4:12). In 2 Corinthians 7:10, worldly sorrow keeps you enslaved to sin leading to death, while godly sorrow leads to change and salvation.

When was the last time that you experienced godly sorrow in light of your personal sin (Psalm 51)?

What needs to be confessed and repented of considering godly sorrow and godly fear?

5. How can you personally allow God to cultivate a trembling awe of who He is in your life?

Recommended Resources:

The Joy of Fearing God- Jerry Bridges

What Does it mean to Fear the Lord? - Michael Reeves

Rejoice & Tremble- Michael Reeves

Passions of the Heart- John Street