

Fear God, Not Man

Reverence that produces respect, obedience, and courage

The Godly Man Course - Lesson 9 | Fear of God and Fear of Man

FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF THE FEAR OF GOD

The fear of God is a sincere reverence of the LORD that derives from sensitivity to His glorious, holy, and majestic Person, which ultimately results in respect and obedience.

A) Why the Fear of God Matters

- The absence of the fear of God lies near the base of secular living: people live as though God is not present to reward, discipline, judge, or be worshiped.
- The fear of God is not the same as staying away from God in terror. Through Christ, God's people draw near with confidence while still honoring His holiness and authority.
- The New Testament connects the fear of God with obedience and holiness.

B) Love and Fear Work Together

- Perfect love casts out the fear of punishment, but this does not eliminate reverence and awe before God.
- The deeper issue is often authority. People reject "honorable fear" because they resist the idea that God has the right to command them.
- A healthy relationship with God includes both delight in His love and submission to His authority.

C) The Shaping Power of Fear

"God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." **Exodus 20:20**

- At Sinai, God revealed His holiness in a way that impressed His people with His greatness.
- The purpose was a lasting fear that would help keep them from sin.
- The fear of God makes a man attentive to God's thoughts, clearer in judgment, and more willing to make costly but faithful decisions.

D) Fathers and Families

- Deuteronomy 6 calls fathers to teach God's Word, believe wholehearted obedience brings the greatest blessing, model godly living, and spend meaningful time shaping their children's view of life.
- Fearing man produces compromise; fearing God gives a father a testimony of faithfulness before his family.
- The question in difficult decisions is simple but demanding: Will I listen to God or man?

Personal Reflections

- Where are you most tempted to fear people's opinions or consequences?
- What does reverence for God practically change in your decisions?
- If you are a father or leader, what are others learning from the way you respond to pressure?

Study Questions

1. How is secular society connected to a lack of the fear of God?

2. How is rejection of authority related to the difficulty people have with fearing God?

3. What was God's purpose in revealing Himself so powerfully at Mount Sinai?

4. List three differences between a person who fears God and one who does not.

5. What are two of the charges God gives fathers in Deuteronomy 6:1-7?
