

Choose to Walk in the Fear of the Lord

"Let all the earth FEAR the LORD, Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in AWE of HIM." Psalm 33:8

The "Fear of the Lord" is mentioned many times in the word of God, especially in the Old Testament. It means **reverential AWE and RESPECT for God**, especially as EVIDENCED by OBEDIENCE to His commands and DOING His will. The New Testament equivalent is HOLY living, being filled with the Spirit, and "walking in a manner worthy of the Lord." Some people have trouble with the concept of FEARING God, because it seems like a negative thing, or has connotations of punishment or abuse from a parent in their childhood. If this is your case, whenever you see the words "fear of the Lord" or "fear God" just substitute "obedience to the Lord" and "OBEY God." Some people just don't like the idea of fearing God, because they want a "touchy-feely" religion, and want to think of God ONLY as a loving, indulgent Heavenly Father. Well, God IS a loving God, but He is not indulgent - **He practices "tough love"**. There are negative consequences for disobeying God, just as there are positive consequences (blessings) for obeying God.

Since the fear of the Lord is the knowledge and wisdom of God, **it is the opposite of thinking you know it all**. Proverbs 1:31 talks about those who will be "filled with **their own devices**" and Proverbs 3:7 says to "be not **wise in your own eyes**" but rather "FEAR the LORD and depart from evil." Those who fear the Lord hate evil, they are open and ready to REPENT whenever they are reproved by God (shown to be wrong), and they listen and incline their ears to His instruction.

- **Psalm 111:10** "The fear of the Lord is **the beginning of wisdom**; a good understanding have all those who DO His commandments."
- **Proverbs 9:10** "The fear of the Lord is **the beginning of wisdom**, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
- **Proverbs 2:1-6** "My son, if you receive My WORDS, and treasure My commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you will cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her (wisdom) as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; **then you will understand the fear of the Lord**, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth (God's word, the Bible) come knowledge and understanding."
- **Proverbs 8:13** "The **FEAR of the LORD is to hate evil**; pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the DISOBEDIENT mouth do I hate."

You don't have to know a lot of Bible - even the most "brand new" baby Christian **can choose to walk in the fear of the Lord**. In fact, the fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of all wisdom and knowledge of God for the new Christian. As we OBEY God's commands that we see **in His word**, even the simplest ones, He will REVEAL **more of His will** for our lives to us. Why should He give us more detailed information if we don't even obey His will that is revealed in His word?

1. **Negative Consequences of Not Fearing God** - God's word says the person who does NOT choose the fear of the Lord is **a FOOL** who enjoys wallowing in his own ignorance! **Only a fool would mock God**, or say there is no God, or put their own opinions above the word of God. Those who disregard God's word, disobey His commandments, and scorn His wisdom will eventually be DESTROYED by their own foolishness and sin (Proverbs 1:22-33). This is especially true of "presumptuous SINS" (Psalm 19:14). This means when a Christian **PRESUMES on God's grace** by disobeying God's commandments deliberately, saying, "Oh, I'll just pray afterwards and God will forgive me." This kind of attitude is the opposite of fearing God, and they REMOVE themselves out from under God's PROTECTION from the evil in the world.

Then, when they try to pray or call on God in times of trouble, it is often too late - they do not have a close relationship with the Lord, and He does not hear their prayers. For a child of God, the consequences are in the physical realm, including early physical death, but the ultimate danger for one who does not fear or know the Lord, is that his or her SOUL will be lost for all eternity.

- **Proverbs 1:7** "The FEAR of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but FOOLS despise wisdom and instruction."
 - **Proverbs 18:2** "A FOOL has no delight in understanding, but [only] in expressing his own heart (his own feelings and opinions)."
 - **Proverbs 12:15** "The way of a FOOL is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds (obeys) counsel is WISE."
 - **Luke 12:19-21** "And I will say to **my soul**, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, '**You FOOL!** This night **your SOUL will be required of you**; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and **is not rich toward God.**"
 - **Proverbs 1:22-33** "How long, you simple (naive, ignorant) ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning. And **fools hate knowledge.** Turn (repent) at My reproof; surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out My hand and no one regarded, because you despised all My counsel, and would have none of My reproof, I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, when your terror comes like a storm, and **your destruction like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.** Then you will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and **did not CHOOSE the FEAR of the Lord**, they would have none of My counsel and despised all My reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of **their own way**, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will DESTROY them; but whoever listens to Me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil."
2. **Positive Consequences of Fearing God** - Walking in the fear of the Lord is the way to have a pure and holy life before God. If you CHOOSE to live and walk in the fear of the Lord, you are promised a long, satisfying life filled with the blessings of God. You will have knowledge of God, and knowledge, understanding and wisdom in dealing with the affairs of this life. You will have all the angels of God as your protection from evil in this world. God will answer your prayers, keep you from temptation, and you will receive mercy, honor, blessing, and forgiveness of sins.
- **Deuteronomy 6:2** "That you might **FEAR the LORD your GOD**, to keep all His statutes and His commandments..... that your days may be PROLONGED."
 - **Psalms 19:9-14** "...the commandment of the Lord is pure..... **the FEAR of the LORD is CLEAN**.....by them is Your servant warned, and in keeping them is GREAT REWARD. Keep Your servant from presumptuous SINS; let them not have dominion over me."
 - **Proverbs 16:6** "By mercy and truth iniquity (sin) is purged (cleansed); and **by the FEAR of the LORD** men DEPART FROM EVIL."
 - **Psalms 31:19** "O how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that FEAR YOU, which you have wrought for them that TRUST in YOU before the sons of men!"
 - **Psalms 33:18-19** "Behold, the EYE of the LORD is upon them that FEAR HIM, upon them that HOPE in His MERCY, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."
 - **Psalms 34:7** "The ANGEL of the LORD encamps round about them that FEAR HIM, and delivers them."
 - **Psalms 66:16** "Come and HEAR, all you who FEAR GOD, and I will declare what He has done for my soul."
 - **Psalms 86:11** "Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth. Unite my heart to FEAR YOUR NAME."

- **Psalm 103:11** "For as the heaven is high above the earth, SO GREAT is His mercy toward them that FEAR HIM."
 - **Psalm 145:19** "He will FULFILL the DESIRE of them that FEAR HIM; He also will HEAR THEIR CRY and will save (deliver) them."
 - **Proverbs 3:7-8** "Be not wise in your own eyes; FEAR the LORD and depart from evil; it will be HEALTH to your BODY, and refreshment to your bones."
 - **Psalm 34:11-13** ".....I will teach you the FEAR of the LORD. What man is he that desires LIFE, and loves many days, that he may see GOOD? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile."
3. **New Testament Equivalents** - Since the New Testament is a covenant of salvation by grace through faith, do we still see the positive and negative consequences of fearing God in the New Testament? Yes, even though it is more often referred to as **holiness or a WALK worthy of the Lord**, but it is still the same. The blessings of God come to those who are obedient, and the consequences of sin and disobedience are referred to as the results of sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption (disease, death).
- **II Corinthians 6:17-18 & 7:1** "'Therefore come out from among them and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting HOLINESS in the FEAR of GOD.**"
 - **Acts 10:1-2** "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius.....a devout man, and **one who FEARED GOD** with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always."
 - **I Thessalonians 2:12** "That you would have **a walk worthy of God** who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."
 - **Ephesians 4:1-2** ".....have **a walk worthy of the calling** with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."
 - **Matthew 6:33** "But **seek FIRST** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
 - **Colossians 1:10** "That you may have **a WALK worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him** in all respects, being fruitful in every good work..."
 - **John 3:22** "And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments**, and do those things which are **pleasing in His sight.**"
 - **John 14:15** "If you LOVE Me, **keep My commandments.**"
 - **Ephesians 5:15** "See then that you **walk** circumspectly, not as FOOLS, but as WISE."

Definition: "Circumspectly" - To look around, be cautious, prudent, careful to consider all circumstances and **POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES**. Remember, there ARE consequences to sin.

- **Proverbs 14:8-9** "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of FOOLS is deceit (they are deceived, "**in denial**"). **Fools mock at sin....**"
- **Galatians 6:7-8** "Do not be deceived; **God is not mocked**: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption; but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap everlasting life."