

Fear and Fear of God



In 1932, during his first inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt made the following statement, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Little did he know how those words would change the world’s view in generations to come. It was however, just that monumental of a statement; a paradigm shift of epic proportions. For maybe the first time in modern history, fear itself was on trial. It was the thing to be demonized and ultimately avoided. Fear was the new enemy – including fear of God. Today, this position has become the new gospel in many/most American churches w/devastating results. It therefore behooves any covenant community still desiring to be faithful to the true God of heaven and earth, to explore afresh this subject - not from the place of modern prejudice, but biblical precedent.

1. **What is fear?** Though fear can manifest itself in the emotions/feelings, they exist only as symptoms or the result of fear’s true identity, which is as a principle of belief: **Fear is the belief that undesirable consequences are associated w/someone/something.** As such, to the degree (that) we believe that association w/someone/something can (or will) have undesirable consequences for us or others, we will be more careful and less reckless as it relates to that person/thing. Likewise, to the degree we do NOT believe that association w/someone/something can (or will) have undesirable consequences for us or others, we will be less careful and more reckless as it relates to that person/thing. We will also feel less afraid and bolder when dealing with that person/thing (e.g. texting while driving, taking drugs, getting drunk, eating at Casa Bonita) (Psa 10:3-4, 10-11, 14:1, 36:1-4: Notice, these passages speak of fear – or lack thereof, only from the perspective of thoughts or belief – not emotion. Notice also, it is such thoughts/beliefs that determine action. In these cases, b/c there in no fear, there is boldness to do sin).

2. **What is fear of God?** Consistent w/the biblical definition (above) fearing God means believing that there are (very) undesirable consequences associated w/Him. IOW: For those who act as His enemies by disobeying Him/doing evil and refuse to repent/serve justice, God threatens to do them great harm (Deu 7:9-10, 28:15-68 w/29:18-20; Psa 7:11-16; Isa 13:11-16; Rom 1:18; Gal 6:7-10; Heb 10:26-31, 12:15-17 w/18-29 w/13:8; fearing God as the means to avoiding wrath – Deu 6:10-11, 7:10, 28:58-68).

3. The consequences associated w/God become even more disturbing (i.e. fear-inducing) once we realize that:

3.1. God is both omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent (i.e. He knows everything, is everywhere and able to carry out whatever He decides to do – Psa 33:13-15, 135:6, 139:1-12)

3.2. God is perfectly trustworthy and just (i.e. He always does what He says and No-one can convince Him to negate seeing that sin is punished– No-one escapes serving justice – Num 23:19; Isa 59:18; Job 8:3-6; Psa 9:7).

3.3. God’s temporal punishment is only the beginning for those who continue to rebel against Him. He has created a place where He will give full vent to His anger against such people, tormenting them forever, through the searing pain of unquenchable fire (Rev 21:8).

4. For these reasons (then) the Bible commands us to fear God (over 50 times).

5. As should be expected, the rebellious of this world, do not like this view of God – neither do many who claim to be Christians. A God who acts in this way, or demands that human-beings fear Him under the threat of such terrible consequences is (to their “modern mind”) a monster. As such, Psychology (i.e. Satan’s most influential false religion in the modern world) and its adherents (including most of Evangelical Christianity) actively oppose fear and fearing God. We should instead, be doing our best to remove the fears of others (especially in re: to God). Hence the push against God or any authority figure making threats, or practicing forms of punishment which inflict physical/mental pain (e.g. response to Trump’s presidential campaign, “Love Trumps Hate/Fear”).

Their reasoning is as follows:

5.1. Fear corrupts those who wield it as well as those who are subject to it¹.

5.2. Fear keeps us from achieving great things/living our dreams².

5.3. God saw a good psychologist and no longer promotes fear but love (i.e. fear was so “Old Covenant”; e.g. 2Ti 1:7; Rom 8:15; Heb 2:14-15, 13:6; 1Jo 4:18).

6. What Psychology/Evangelical Christianity and their adherents fail to understand about fear or fearing God:

6.1. Suppressing evil in this world requires the wicked be in fear of swift and painful justice (Ecc 8:11; Isa 26:19; the hypocrisy of the United States in re: to parents w/children v. law enforcement w/criminals or peace-keeping troops w/civilians = ignorance, incompetency of parents or property discrepancy?).

6.2. Fear is not the cause of corruption in people. Rather it is sin (i.e. the choice to use fear for evil purposes or respond to it in a wicked way). To make fear the enemy is the same argument used by liberals against guns (i.e. the problem is guns versus the wicked people using them for evil).

¹ “It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it” – Aung San Suu Kyi; “Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein were all raised by brutal parents who frequently beat them. Growing up, they lived in daily fear. All of them went on to become dictators who maintained complete control over people through their use of fear inducing terror.” – Psychology Today

² “Despite all its uncertainty, fear does make a few guarantees: Fear kills dreams, Fear holds us back, Fear distorts our world and fear determines our success or failure.” – PicktheBrain.Com

6.3. God created our brains in such a way that it devotes the most space and energy to fear³ (How can what God created be negative/bad?).

6.4. Fear of God is just as much a “New Testament” thing as it was in the Old Testament (Rom 11:20; 2Co 5:11, 7:1, 11; Phi 2:12; Col 3:22; 1Ti 5:20; Heb 10:27-31, 11:7, 12:21; 1Pe 1:17, 2:17; Rev 19:5).

6.5. The fear being discouraged in the NT is the same as that found in the OT and is remedied thru possessing fear of God (2Ti 1:7 w/1:4 and 1Ti 1:3 = fear of man – Pro 29:25// Rom 8:15 w/8:1-4 = fear of the slavery to sin – Exo 20:20//Heb 2:14-15 = slavery to the devil – Eph 2:1-2//Heb 13:6 = the fear of man – Psa 118:6 //1Jo 4:18 = fear of being condemned in the coming judgment b/c I do not love God or my brother thru keeping His commandments – 1Jo 5:1-3)

6.6. Fear (and especially fear of God) is the most powerful motivator and therefore also the means to accomplishing great things⁴.

6.7. Love cannot compete w/fear when it comes to the issue of motivation (or influence) since it (too) finds its basis in fear. IOW: love cannot exist w/o fear.⁵ Love and fear (therefore) are not competing principles. Rather, fear is the pre-requisite to love. This includes our love for God. The way to love God is by keeping His commandments (1Jo 5:3), but to do that, we must fear God. Consider (Deu 13:1-4; Exo 20:1-20). The same sequence is found in both texts: 1) God tests (or assesses) the people’s love based on their submission to His Law (Deu 13:3; Exo 20:6 w/20a), 2) Such obedience (and love) is the result of fearing God (Deu 13:4; Exo 20:20b). So then, the way we resist sin/sinful temptations is through fearing God (i.e. it is the key to faithfulness – Deu 8:6, 10:12; Pro 16:6) which in the end, results in obeying and loving God. That is how God sees it (to love Him we must fear Him).

6.8. Fearing God (however) does more than just prove our love for God or motivate us to obey His commands/resist sinful temptations. It also affords to us (personally), some very desirable blessings: 1) God becomes our friend and takes pleasure in us (Psa 25:14, 147:11), 2) God stores up good things for us as those He greatly loves (Psa 31:19, 34:9, 61:5, 103:11-13, 17, 118:4), 3) God promises to protect and provide for us (Psa 33:18, 34:7, 11, 60:4, 111:5, 115:11, 13), 4) God fulfills our desires (Psa 145:19), 5) God prolongs our lives (i.e. gives good health) (Pro 10:27, 14:27, 19:23, 22:4; Ecc 8:12-13; Deu 6:20-24), 6) God grants forgiveness/salvation (Psa 85:1-9). IOW: God gives incredible blessings and abundant life to those who fear Him (Deu 5:29, 6:1-3, 7:12-14; 1Sa 12:14, 24; Psa 112:1, 128:1, 4; Pro 28:14)!

7. Signs those professing to be Christians are failing to understand the fear of God or how to cultivate it

7.1. You fail to understand that fearing God is the chief end of man (i.e. the only way to accomplishing everything else God requires – love, obedience, etc. Hence why it is called “the beginning of wisdom” (Ecc 12:13; Pro 9:10; 2Co 7:1 – “perfecting holiness in the fear of God”).

7.2. You sit under a pastor who does not fear God and so acts as an idolatrous representative of Christ/God through his lack of: anger toward and discipline of sin, passionate jealousy for purity and pursuit of justice in the church (Exo 18:21; Deu 16:18-20; Mat 18:20; Joh 2:14-17; Isa 11:2-3 – Christ’s delight was in the fear of the Lord; the test of a good pastor: He is an accurate representative of God/Christ to His people – esp. in his response to sin).

7.3. You (or your children) are not only committing capital crimes but choosing (then) to hide it (Pro 28:13; Rom 3:10-18).

7.4. You hold your children to low expectations as to current behavior or future career though God has called all of His children to be examples of excellence and respect in society (i.e. you fear your kids missing out on the virtues of being a silly, slouchy, sloppy, slothful and stinky or getting sucky grades and underperforming more than fearing God’s demands or the demands and preparing them for life in the real world where they will utterly fail if this is how they enter it; Consider: there is a reason the best prep schools make the kids wear uniforms).

7.5. The discipline of your children lacks the justice, severity and frequency necessary to cultivate sufficient fear of you which translates into an idolatrous view of God, since you (too) represent Him in your places of authority – i.e. if they don’t fear you who they can see, they won’t fear Him who they can’t see (As it re: to justice = No such thing as “grace” which negates justice. Also, the punishment must fit the crime not be less than// As it re: to severity = Like God, our anger sb displayed, disturbing and used to fuel this unpleasant work//As it re: to frequency = Like God, any failure to comply – no matter how small must be punished; why frequency is so important - e.g. Galveston last hurricane to make landfall was in 1900: 8k dead. Nothing since so the coastline was re-populated w/no fear; Pro 13:24, 23:13-14; Psa 90:11-12; Rom 1:18; Psa 119:67, 75; Consider also Heb 12:3-13; e.g. how serious does God call us to take adultery? Is that how you are treating your children when they look at porn/masturbate since Jesus considers such actions to be adultery if they were married? Why will it be any different in their marriages than it is now? If they are unrestrained now they w/b in their marriages as well; Consider Eli – God condemned him bc he did not restrain the sexual rebellion of his children and they grew up to become wicked adulterers – 1Sa 2:22 w/3:13).

7.6. The time you give to discussing God’s Word and warning of God’s wrath in the home is minimal at best yet this is also key to cultivating proper fear of God (Deu 6:1-25).

³ See “[Fear Conditioning: How the Brains Learn About Danger](#)”; BrainConnection.com

⁴ In 2015, the question of motivation was asked of some of the United States and South America’s most successful businessmen and politicians. The answer most commonly given was fear (i.e. the fear of regret). By way of example, consider the key point of Bill Belichick’s speech at the victory parade in Boston after the Patriots won the Super Bowl (“No days off!”). IOW: What motivated the best franchise in the history of the NFL to work so hard was the fear of missing out/regret of not making to the Super Bowl b/c of the other 31 teams w/the same aspirations. Even Psychology admits to the unmatched power of fear to motivate, “The most powerful motivator is fear...Our most vivid memories are born in fear... Adrenaline etches them into our brains...Fear invokes the fight or flight syndrome... Fear is the prime motivator because it is rooted in our childhood experiences and it moves us subconsciously. Fear is such a strong driver of our behavior that it also forms the basis of every other motivator in our lives.” (Psychology Today).

⁵ According to the Bible, to love something/someone is to value it. Yet it is impossible to value something/someone that doesn’t have the potential to be permanently lost through our own actions or the actions of other persons/things since this is what gives all persons/things value. It is no so much their benefit as it is the rarity of something/someone else being able to replace them/it. Hence why w/those things we love/value more, we are willing to give more up to secure or keep them safe (e.g. our salvation in Christ; Mat 13:36; e.g. this is the whole basis of insurance policies).