

THE NEED TO FEAR GOD

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Many in this world do not fear God. To fear God means to show respect and awe toward Him. Fearing God is one of the foundations of a life that will please God and bring us spiritual blessings. Consider what the Bible says about the need to fear God.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). There is much knowledge in this world, but knowing the difference between what is worth knowing and what is worthless begins with a humble attitude toward God and His wisdom. Submitting to the wisdom of God is the first step to discerning and approving the “things that are excellent” (Philippians 1:9-10). To the school of Bible learning is where we go to understand the true meaning of life.

“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Our task on this earth boils down to one thing – fear God and obey His word. Fearing and obeying are not two distinct ideals but one way of life. If we fear God, we will keep His commandments. If we do not keep His commandments, it is because we do not fear God. The apostle Peter restated this truth at the house of Cornelius when he said, “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:35). This is everyone’s purpose in life.

“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Our highest respect is to be given to those who have the highest positions of authority and power. Man may try to convince us that we should always follow his dictates, but God is still the highest authority (cf. John 19:11). We should respect and fear civil authorities, but when they turn against that which is godly, we should not be intimidated by them. God will always have greater power, and we must remain faithful to Him. “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6).

“Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28). The next verse adds, “For our God is a consuming fire” (v. 29). If one understands who God is and all that He has done for us, how could he refuse to serve Him in fear? Knowing His terrible wrath toward sin (cf. 10:26-31), who could defy His loving words of salvation? Let us learn from the godly fear of Noah, who obeyed God’s instructions (11:7), and Jesus, who lived a perfect life in godly fear (5:7).

As a children’s song says, “We are weak, but He is strong.” A healthy dose of godly fear will do us good. Knowing we shall stand before Almighty God in judgment, let us show fear (respect) for His name and humbly submit to His sovereign will.