



Healthy Vs. Unhealthy Fear of God

Why The Fear Of God Is Important

- To be civilized
 - The system that has worked the best throughout history is a healthy fear of God
- Human law is fallible and malleable.
 - Fallible because human leaders make mistakes.
 - Malleable because it can be usurped and misused by the powerful and malicious.

Why The Fear Of God Is Important

- Whether governments or citizens realize or accept it, we all are accountable to God who sees everything and is powerful enough to discipline everyone. This fear inspires deference and deterrence.
 - Deference means respect for principles of civilized living
 - Deterrence means that humankind dreads the consequences of giving in to the uncivilized urges that tempt the human heart.

Why The Fear Of God Is Important

- While fear of God is healthy, when misinformed or misunderstood, it becomes unhealthy making us paranoid or paralyzed.
 - Develop a proper knowledge of God's will and benevolence.
 - Cultivate a healthy fear of God and afterward grow toward love for God
- Fear of God is healthy when it inspires deference and deterrence, but becomes unhealthy when it incites paranoia and paralysis.



Unhealthy fear of God



Paranoia

Paralysis



Healthy fear of God



Deference

Deterrence



Understanding The Fear Of God

- A healthy fear of God disciplines our minds and regulates our lives
- It does not overrule or interfere with any other emotion that we feel toward God, including love, reverence and adoration, but rather it completes our relationship with Him
- It motivates sound, zealous works of righteousness and encourages initiative in duty, rather than debilitating the will or paralyzing reason

Understanding The Fear Of God

- Fear of God is often mis-taught and more often misunderstood than many other Bible principles
- The religiously ignorant and spiritually dysfunctional use fear as their prime motivator and instrument of control
- Every matter emphasized out of Biblical proportion causes harm, and that includes fear

Understanding The Fear Of God

- Ignorance of how God thinks and feels about us
 - Luke 15:18-22 - “I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. 20 And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.”

Understanding The Fear Of God

- Going to extremes of worship not specified in scripture
 - Acts 17:22-25 - “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

Understanding The Fear Of God

- Fear of making a mistake in service keeping us from service
 - Matt. 25:24-25 - “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.”

Understanding The Fear Of God

- Serving with wrong motivation
- Ritualized and quantified religion - What does God require of me and how much? (Going through the motions)
- Good works done to “appease” God
- Overactive external conscience (God’s gonna get me) leads to the lack of development of a healthy conscience (I will do this because God said it is good)
- The belief God is untouchable, unreachable, and malignant
- Over-reacting to the misguided teaching and belief by rejecting all Bible teaching on the fear of God
- An unhealthy fear of God causes one to live under the bondage of a clouded image of Him fabricated in our minds

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- God's desire to forgive us
 - Eph. 1:7 - "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"
 - Psalm 103:12 - "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."
 - Isa. 38:17 - "Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back."

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- Micah 7:18-19 - “Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.”
- Col. 2:13-14 - “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- Peace with God

- Col. 1:19-21 - “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled”
- Rom. 5:1-2 - “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- God loves His children
 - John 13:1 - “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”
 - Jer. 31:3 - “The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”
 - Rom. 5:8 - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- Eph. 2:4-7 - “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
- 1John 3:1 - “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- God keeps His children safe
 - Psalm 91:4 - “He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.”
 - Psalm 125:2 - “As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD surrounds His people From this time forth and forever.”

Un-Clouding The Image Of God In Our Minds

- God will always be there for us
 - Rom. 8:37-39 - “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”