

Call to Obedience #401
 PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

The Fear of the LORD

by Reimar Schultze

I am constrained today to write to you about that great subject matter of the fear of the Lord. First, observe that *The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy* (Psalm 147:11). Now, to take pleasure is beyond being satisfied. It is beyond approval. It is to be delighted, thrilled and impressed. When a school teacher takes pleasure in a student's essay, it is more than he can put in a grade of "A." It is pleasure that causes the teacher's load to be lighter and his day to be brighter.

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To conceive then that we mortal men, weak as we are and as guilty as we often feel, are capable of giving God pleasure is indeed enormously grand, especially considering that God has so many things to take pleasure in: the heavens and their splendor, the seas glittering in the morning sun, the clouds filtering the setting sun, the pelicans in their love dance, the brilliantly colored fish feeding above the coral reefs; yet we read of none of these things causing Him pleasure.

But it is those *that fear him* that "make His day," and cause Him to "chuckle in delight." It is those *that fear him* that He longs for, looks upon and looks after continually. He takes *pleasure in them that fear him!* Oh, what a verse. I cannot quite get over the fact that needy little me can give more pleasure to the immortal, invisible, almighty, everlasting God than anything else in this universe!

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Let us now consider, the height, the length, the width and the depth of the doctrine of the fear of the Lord. If numbers of verses, references and biblical illustrations count toward the importance of a doctrine, then this doctrine of the fear of God is one of the most powerful doctrines of the Bible. Here are a few references to be considered. Meditate upon each one of them before you go on to the next. Do not be in a hurry.

Serve *the LORD with fear...* (Psalm 2:11). Worship the Lord in fear (Psalm 5:7). Great goodness is *laid up for them that fear thee...* (Psalm 31:19). *Behold the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him...* (Psalm 33:18). He will teach us the fear of the Lord if we come to Him (Psalm 34:11). ...*Great is his mercy toward them that fear him* (Psalm 103:11). ...*The LORD pitieth them that fear him* (Psalm 103:13). The Lord is a help and

shield to those who fear Him (Psalm 115:11). *He will bless them that fear the LORD...* (Psalm 115:13).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge... (Proverbs 1:7). *The fear of the LORD prolongeth days...* (Proverbs 10:27). *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life...* (Proverbs 14:27). *By the fear of the LORD men depart from evil* (Proverbs 16:6). The fear of the Lord is protection against evil (Proverbs 19:23).

The fear of the LORD was one of the first fruits of Pentecost: *And fear came upon every soul...* (Acts 2:43). The early church walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). Cornelius was a devout man who feared God (Acts 10:2). *But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him* (Acts 10:35). Salvation belongs to those who fear God (Acts 13:26). We are to perfect *holiness in the fear of God* (2 Corinthians 7:1). We are to submit *one to another in the fear of God* (Ephesians 5:21). We are to work out our *own salvation with fear and trembling* (Philippians 2:12). *...Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear* (1 Peter 1:17). These words are given to those who fear His name (Revelation 11:18). Oh, what all are we receiving when we fear the Lord?

What is the fear of the Lord? Doesn't John say, *...perfect love casteth out fear...* (1 John 4:18)? Yes, but it only casts out fear of the Judgment Day and nothing else. Saints do not fear judgment; they fear the Lord. Even Jesus had the fear of the Lord. *He was heard in that he feared* (Hebrews 5:7). All must fear God.

Now this fear of the Lord can be defined in many ways. It is really beyond description. But we can try to add to the descriptions the Bible gives. For me to start with, the fear of the Lord is an awareness of the awesome presence of a holy, loving God, whom I do not want to disappoint at any cost. Therefore to me, the fear of the Lord is the greatest deterrent against sin (Psalm 4:4). If I do not have this fear, I cannot come to oneness with Him. Oneness with Him is everything to me.

The fear of the LORD is also a call to surrender. *Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him* (Psalm 33:8).

But again, those who do not fear God have reason to fear His judgment. They have reason to be tormented by thoughts of His wrath even before it is being poured out upon them.

There are so many things connected to the fear of the Lord! Oh, what all is embedded in that great treasure-house of the fear of the Lord? I have already mentioned mercy, goodness, protection and knowledge, etc. Let us add honor. God *...honoureth them that fear the LORD...* (Psalm 15:4). Is there any honor for any of us without the fear of the Lord? Is His honor more important to us than that of men, or are we like the Pharisees seeking the honor of men rather than of God?

Oh, how we need the fear of the Lord! What marvelous jewelry she wears; what precious stones adorn her. They that fear the Lord will know His secrets (Psalm 25:14). God gives them wisdom and understanding (Psalm 111:10). To what, my friend, do you ascribe that great wisdom and understanding Jesus showed at twelve years of age when He disputed with the doctors of the law in the temple? What university had He attended? What books had He read? What teacher had He been with? I tell you, friend, all of this brilliance comes out of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord opens unto the heart of man the finest library of spiritual truths. It reveals its rarest treasures.

Those who fear the Lord will never lack angelic support. Angels camp about them—not an angel, but angels! (Psalm 34:7 and Psalm 91:11) Would you like angels with you in your home, your kitchen, your garage, your car and in all your travels? Yes, fear the Lord and you will have them. When Jesus was cast out of the synagogue in Nazareth, they picked up stones, and apprehending Him, purposed to cast Him down a cliff, but His angels prevented them. Fear the Lord and you will always have the company of ministering angels.

To fear the Lord means to have what we need. Once in a while? Sometimes? Often? No, always! There is no lack to them who fear him! (Psalm 34:9). We will have His presence all the time: in freedom and in imprisonment, in plenty and in poverty, in sickness and in health, in loss and in gain, in life and in death. He will always supply all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

The fear of the LORD comes from the Holy Spirit; and everyone who is filled with the Spirit will be generous in sharing, faithful in prayer, steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and committed to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Those who fear the Lord will be submissive to authorities. The fear of the Lord prevents us from judging, criticizing and finding fault in others. It prevents us from becoming lukewarm and slothful in prayer and church attendance. It keeps us on the firing line, working out our *own salvation with fear and trembling* (Philippians 2:12), and *perfecting holiness in the fear of God* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Again, not a single person without the fear of the Lord will be found in heaven: *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great* (Revelation 19:5), *...that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great...* (Revelation 11:18). Lacking the fear of God is one of the distinguishing marks of all the wicked (Romans 3:18). God's kingdom cannot operate without it. Heaven cannot be heaven without it.

The fear of the Lord breeds obedience; it never breeds pride or self-righteousness. It rather produces brokenness, humility and a constant penitent attitude saying with the publican: *...God be merciful to me a sinner* (Luke 18:13).

If we fear God, we need not fear anything else—not man, not the future, not the devil, nor the Judgment. So, let us *...pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:17-19)*. Again, let us ever walk *in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost...* (Acts 9:31).

Yes, what marvelous companions they are: comfort and fear—fear without trembling, fear without anxiety, fear without frustration, but fear that is a balm to the soul and a help on the narrow way that is lit by the glory of our awesome LORD.

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