

Doctrine of Fear and Respect

1. What the Bible teaches about fear is somewhat enigmatic.
2. We are told to fear God and yet we are also told perfect love casts out all fear. C. S. Lewis provides, in his own special way, an answer to the dilemma. How can you fear God, and yet confidently trust Him for your every need?
3. In his book The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe he writes of two children searching for their brother, who is under the spell of a wicked witch. They are desperate for help when they hear that the Lion King of Narnia is on the move. The Lion in his book is symbolic of Christ the God-man. The children both fear and respect the Lion King hoping He might help them, one of the children, says, "Ooh!" said Susan, "Is he safe? I feel quite nervous about meeting a lion." "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good.' He's the King ..." Christ as the Lion of Judah is quite the companion, strong, bold, perfect and devoted to His pride but better yet, my Christian friend, He is Good!
 - 3.1 The more we surrender to fear, the more things we will fear.
 - 3.2 The more things we surrender to fear, the greater our capacity for fear.
 - 3.3 The greater our capacity for fear, the more we increase the power of fear in our life.
 - 3.4 The more we increase the power of fear in our life, the harder it becomes to grow in His grace.
 - 3.5 Fear can be a sin or an evil in our life. Fear, as a sin, can be handled easily, just name it to God and move on. Fear, which becomes evil, is another matter.
 - 3.6 If we let the sin of fear stick around, it will become an evil, a terrible mental attitude sin which is both irrational and irresponsible; and thus, a terrible distraction, breeding failure and unhappiness.
 - 3.7 That man should fear and respect God is an established principle. In one sense, however, as His prized possession, the regenerate man with doctrine should bask in the fact that God is our shield and our very great reward. In another sense God is not to be mocked or tempted.

Gen 15:1 After his deliverance of Lot, the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, **Fear** not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

 - 3.7.1 The carnal man, in contrast, is like an animal left to provide for himself in fear, protected from death, but left to live as an object of God's discipline. Lot feared to travel the way God directed. Gen 19:17-19

Gen 19:17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Gen 19:18 But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please!

Gen 19:19 Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains of Zoar; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die.

3.8 The closing chapter in the career of Lot is a pitiful period of fear and incest.

3.9 Lot found himself evicted from his city of choice to live in fear of God and man. Zoar is a city located on the south shore of the Dead sea, its king had been one of the kings who had earlier captured Lot, requiring Abraham to rescue both him and his family.

3.10 Lot and his family failed miserably. Disaster, disgrace, despair, and death are written in their epitaph.

3.11 On his tombstone an appropriate inscription might have been: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).

3.12 The fear and the dread of appearing before a Holy God are eliminated-or ought to be-in the life of a believer.

1Jo 4:18 There is no fear in love (**Agape**). But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Rom 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ...

Rom 8:33 Who will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. *The answer is of course not.*

3.13 A fear and reverence for God is one of the requirements of a leader. It was one of the requisites given to Moses as a character requirement. Leaders may fear, but it is what they do with fear that is important. An old WWII cliché when speaking of what the British citizens did in response to the awful "buzz bombings." "Fear knocked at the door but courage answered."

Exo 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died, more than that, who was raised to life, and is at the right hand of God interceding for us. Certainly not.

3.14 The Scriptures speak of the following kinds of fear:

3.15 A holy fear which amounts to awe or respect for the majesty and holiness of God. Said another way: Godly fear is a deep and abiding respect because we know of His essence and attributes, but it has to be learned.

Psa 34:11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

3.15.1 David speaks of a fear which is clean and pure; one which creates joy in the heart and light to the eyes.

Psa 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving **joy** to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Psa 19:9 The **fear** of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

3.16 The Bible, in several places, speaks of a reverential fear which is the basis or beginning of all true wisdom. Joy goes hand in hand with confidence on the road to happiness. Christians are to be joyful as we await the ecstatic and ultimate felicity and bliss at the end of our journey.

3.17 The writer of Pro 1:7 and Psa 111:10 both agree that fear and respect of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding ...

3.18 Reverential fear provides respect for God's authorities; such respect will be seen by others as a good witness. Others may want what you have.

Psa 2:11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Pro 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

2Co 7:1 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.

Phi 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

3.19 We are to fear secular authority, for each has been established as God's agent to facilitate peace and prosperity within the nation.

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

Rom 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Rom 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

3.20 Such a fear is proper, but there is an insensate dread which should not be a part of our make-up--worry or anxiety without cause."

Heb 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not **fear** what man shall do unto me.

1Pe 2:18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all **respect (Phobos)**, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

Num 14:9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And **do not be afraid** of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. **Do not be afraid** of them."

3.21 Discipline from the Lord is very often painful, but always perfect; it is done in love, God knows our frame and therefore provides that which is needed. Rom 8:28 compared with 1Th 5:18

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1Th 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

3.21.1 A believer's fear of discipline and reverential respect for God should be parlayed into a productive walk with God. A walk with God can only be accomplished by means of the consistent use of the two power options. Discipline must not be feared but approached as an "opportunity to learn."

Pro 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

3.22 Fear is an essential element in the Christian life, be it reverence of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, or an advised concern.

1Pe 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

1Pe 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear (**Phobos**):

3.23 As believers, we are told to fear the failure of moving to spiritual maturity.

Heb 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Heb 4:2 For unto us was the good news of God's grace preached, as well as unto the exodus generation: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Heb 4:3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.

Heb 4:4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work."

Heb 4:5 And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

Heb 4:6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

3.24 Israel didn't embrace the promises of God and neither did they fear Him. Israel received both national discipline and even now (though in the main unaware) they await a time of Jacob's trouble--the Tribulation.

Jer 30:6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

Jer 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of **Jacob's trouble**, but he shall be saved out of it.

3.25 Witnessing must be done with meekness and fear.

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

3.25.1 Meekness in 1Pe 3:15 is **Prautes** meaning "gentleness" or "compassion." In this verse, fear is **Phobos**, meaning respect and reverential fear.

3.25.2 Witnessing is to be approached as serious business, and not to be done on the fly, but with gentleness, compassion, respect and a healthy fear of God.

3.26 There will be a very real fear of God's holiness on the part of those counted among the wicked at the Lord's coming.

Isa 2:10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

Isa 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day ...

Isa 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Luk 21:25 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;"

Luk 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Luk 21:27 "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Rev 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Rev 11:11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Rev 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, the merchants who had prospered so from her said, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come...

Rev 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

3.27 In Psa 14:3-5, the writer speaks of the need to fear if you choose to thumb your nose at God.

Psa 14:3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Psa 14:4 Will evildoers never learn--those who devour my people as men eat bread and who do not call on the LORD?

Psa 14:5 There they are, overwhelmed with **fear**, for God is present in the company of the righteous.

3.28 Christians without doctrine are anxious and fearful, as over against the mature believer who is confident and courageous.

Pro 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

3.29 Though there is a place for fearing establishment, and there is a place for the fleeting emotion of fear; those who do the will of God have no reason to fear.

3.29.1 Fear is a legitimate response to a real danger; it is built into our souls to allow an appropriate response. For example: fleeing a wild animal, avoiding a poisonous snake, etc.

3.30 Paul uses fear in a figurative sense, when he speaks of his concern that there is rampant reversionism among the Corinthians.

1Co 2:3 I came to you in weakness **and fear**, and with much trembling.

2Co 11:3 But I **am afraid** that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2Co 12:20 For **I am afraid** that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

2Co 12:21 I **am afraid** that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

4. Cowardice or timidity, as in "a spirit of fear" is to be avoided.

2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the **spirit of fear**; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Mat 8:26 He replied, "You of little faith, **why are you so afraid?**" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

5. Fear can be a mental attitude sin; a sin that creates an anxious dread in our soul. The faith rest mechanics are designed to counter the effects of both "abnormal" and "normal fear."

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

1Pe 5:7 **Cast all your anxiety on him** because he cares for you.

6. Overcoming fear as a dominating force in ones life comes from Bible doctrine metabolized in the soul of the believer.

Psa 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil**: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psa 56:3 **When I am afraid**, I will trust in you.

Psa 56:11 In God I trust; **I will not be afraid**. What can man do to me?

Heb 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, **not fearing** the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

6.1 Fear should never be the motivation for our choices, but rather obedience to informed wisdom i.e., doctrine.

7. Satan wants us to fear death; accordingly, God has provided many Scriptures urging courage.

Heb 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--
Heb 2:15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their **fear of death**.

7.1 The dissolution of our life on earth (death) should never be feared. John Bunyan said it this way:

"Let dissolution come when it will, it can do the Christian no harm, for it will be but a passage out of a prison into a palace, out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies to an innumerable company of true, loving, and faithful friends; out of shame, and reproach, and contempt into exceeding great and eternal glory."

7.2 This should be our attitude, even if or when, we are blessed to serve our country in battle. When it is your time, you will die, and not a minute before then!

Jos 8:1 And the LORD said unto Joshua, **Fear not**, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

Exo 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not**, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.

Exo 14:14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Deu 31:8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, **neither be dismayed**.

Deu 31:9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark ... of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

Isa 41:10 **Fear thou not**; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isa 41:11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

8. The promise of Psa 4:8 helps to overcome unhealthy fear and anxiety. Fears are often magnified in the closet of the night. Nocturnal fears however, seem to shrink at dawns first light.

Psa 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psa 34:4 I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears.

9. Solomon in his old age said "old folks" often lose their usefulness, for they are full of fear.

Ecc 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"--

Ecc 12:2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain;

Ecc 12:3 when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim;

Ecc 12:4 when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint;

Ecc 12:5 when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home ...

10. For the child of God, whether young or old, we must remember there is joy in the morning, for in His service there is life abundant.

Psa 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but **joy** cometh in the **morning**.