

Principles to cultivate a blessed life

An in-depth study of Psalm 112(Part-2) on 23.2.2014

Introduction:

“**The fear of the Lord**” is a key theme in the wisdom literature of the Bible (Job through Songs of Solomon). It is to recognize God for who He is: Holy, Almighty, Righteous, Pure, All-Knowing, All-Powerful and All-Wise. It means to have respect, honour and reverence for God and to be in AWE of His Majesty and Power. When we regard God correctly, we gain a clear picture of ourselves: sinful, weak, frail and needy. When we truly recognize who God is and who we are, we will FALL AT HIS FEET in humble respect. Only then will He show us how to choose His way. This is the starting point to finding real wisdom (Proverbs 1:7-9).

The meaning of the fear of the Lord.

To fear the Lord **encompasses** different aspects of the believer’s relationship with God.

(1) Essential to fearing God is knowledge of His holiness, Justice and Righteousness as a **counterpart** of His Love & Mercy, i.e knowing Him and understanding fully who He is(cf pr 2:5). Godly fear is based on the conviction that God is a holy God whose **very nature** leads Him to judge sin.

(2) The fear of the Lord requires a knowledge of the Holy One (pr 9:10) that regards Him with holy **awe and reverence**, and honors God as GOD because of His **Great Glory, Holiness, Majesty and Power**.

For example, when the Israelites at Mount Sinai saw God manifest Himself through “thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast”, they all TREMBLED in fear (Ex 19:6) and begged Moses to speak God’s message rather than God addressing them Himself (Ex 20:18-19 & Deut 5:22-27).

Also, the Psalmist in his reflections on God as Creator, states explicitly: “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere Him. For he spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm” (Ps 33:8-9).

(3) True fear of the Lord causes believers to place their faith and trust in Him alone for salvation. For example: after the Israelites crossed over the Red Sea on dry ground and saw the enormous destruction of the Egyptian Army, they “feared the LORD and put their trust in Him”(Ex 14:13). Similarly, the Psalmist calls on all who fear the Lord to “trust in the Lord- He is their help and shield”(Ps 115:11). In other words, the fear of the Lord produces in God’s people a confident hope and trust in Him.

(4) To fear God involves recognizing that sin has serious consequences and that both in time and in eternity God has the power to punish those who break His righteous laws(compare Ps76:7-8). When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they were afraid and tried to hide from God’s presence (Ge3:8-10). Moses experienced this aspect of the fear of God when he spent forty days and nights in prayer on behalf of the sinful Israelites: “I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for He was angry enough to destroy you”(Deut 9:19).

Similarly in the NT, immediately after acknowledging God's coming vengeance and judgment, the author of the Hebrews wrote: "It is dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"(Heb 10:31).

Reasons for the fear of the Lord.

In keeping with the meaning of the fear of the Lord are the following reasons for fearing Him:

- (1) We should fear Him because of His authority as the creator of all things and people (Ps 33:6-9; 96:4-5; John 1:19). The fact that God's awesome authority and power continues to be exercised over the elements of creation and over the human race is sufficient cause for fearing Him (Ex 20:18-20; Ecc3:14; Mk 4:39-41).
- (2) The holiness of God and His separation from & constant opposition to sin and unrighteousness should cause us to fear Him (Rev 15:4).
- (3) The universal judgment of God at the end of history should cause us to fear Him who judges all injustice and inequity (Deut 17:12-13; Is 59:18-19; Mal 3:5; Heb 10:26-31). It is a solemn and holy truth of Scripture that on the day of final judgment every person will give an account to God for his/her actions and the stewardship of life (Eccl 12:4; Ro 14:10&12; 2-Co 5:10 and Rev 20:12-13).
- (4) God has promised to bless and honor all those who fear Him "Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life"(Pr 22:4). Other blessings promised include protection from death (Pr14:26-27), provision for our daily needs (Ps 34:9; 111:5) and a long life (Pr 10:27).
- (5) Those who fear the Lord know that "it will go better with God-fearing men "regardless of what happens in the world around them"(Eccl 8:12-13).

Other reasons to fear God:

- (a) **He is the object and author of Godly fear** (Is 8:13; Jer 32: 39-40).
- (b) **Scripture is understood through fear** (Prov 2:3-5)
- (c) **Godly fear or fear of God is described as:**
 - The beginning of knowledge: (Pr 1:7; 9:10; 15:33)
 - Hatred of evil (Pr 8:13)
 - Wisdom (Job 28:28; Ps 111:10)
 - A treasure to saints (Pr15:16; Is 33:6)
 - A fountain of life (Pr 14:27)
 - Is sanctifying (Ps19:9)
 - Filial and reverential (Heb12:9 and 12:28)
- (d) **Is Commanded** (Deut 13:4; Ps 2:;11; Ps 22:23; Eccl 12:13 &1-Pet 2:17)
- (f) **Motivates to know & understand:**
 - The holiness of God (Rev 15:4)
 - The greatness of God (Deut 10:12; 10:17)
 - The goodness of God (1-Sam 12:24)
 - The forgiveness of God (Ps130:4)
 - Wondrous works of God (Josh 4:23-24)
 - Judgments of God (Rev 14:7)

(g) **Necessary for believers to:**

- The worship of God (Ps 5:7; Ps 89:7)
- The service of God (Ps 2:11; Heb 12:28)
- Avoiding of sin (Ex 20:20)
- Righteous government (2-Sam 23:3)
- Impartial administration of justice (2-Chr 19:6-9)
- Perfecting Holiness (2-Cor 7:1)

(h) **Those who have it:**

- Give pleasure to God (Ps 147:11)
- Are pitied by God (Ps 103:13)
- Are accepted by God (Acts 10:35)
- Receive mercy from God (Ps 103:11; 103:17; Luke 1:50)
- Are Blessed (Ps 112:1; Ps 115:13)
- Confide in God (Ps 115:11; Pro 14:26)
- Depart from evil (Pro 16:6)
- Converse together of holy things (Mal 3:16)
- Should not fear man (Is 8:12-13; Matt 10:28)
- Have their desires, fulfilled by God (Ps 145:19)
- Have their days, prolonged (Pro 10:27)

(i) **Should be:**

- Prayed for (Ps 86:11)
- Exhibited in our service (Col 3:22)
- Exhibited in giving a reason for our hope (1-Pet3:15)
- Constantly maintained (Deut 14:23; Josh 4:24 and Pro 23:17)
- Taught to others (Ps 34:11)

May the LORD ALMIGHTY open our hearts & minds to understand the real meaning of the fear of the Lord and receive all the blessings that are promised for those who fear the Lord.....Amen.