

TO "FEAR" God ?

I often hear people explain the fear of the Lord as a mere respect or reverence. But the Bible uses the word *fear* at least 300 times in reference to God, so we make a mistake when we downplay it. The subject becomes even more mysterious when we read something like [1 John 4:18](#) that says that "perfect love expels all fear." So how do we marry this dichotomy? How can we fear God while he expels all fear?

Scripture is full of examples of how fearing God is a positive rather than a negative thing. For example in [Genesis 42:18](#), Joseph wins his brothers' trust when he declares he is a God-fearing man. It was because the midwives feared God that they obeyed him instead of the authorities by sparing the Hebrew babies ([Exodus 1:17](#)). Pharaoh brought disaster on his nation because he did not fear God ([Exodus 9:29-31](#)). Moses chose leaders to help him on the basis that they feared God and wouldn't take bribes ([Exodus 18:21](#)) and told the Hebrews that God met with them in a terrifying display of his power so that they wouldn't sin ([Exodus 20:20](#)). The Mosaic Law cites fear of God as a reason to treat the disabled and elderly well ([Leviticus 19:14, 32](#)). And lest you think this is only an Old Testament idea, note that Jesus states this stronger than anyone when he says, "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell" ([Matthew 10:28](#)). And Paul says to work toward complete holiness because we fear God ([2 Corinthians 7:1](#)).

So it's clear from these passages, that fearing God is good because it saves us from caving into our own sinful nature. That's why hearing someone is God-fearing actually makes us trust that person more. If they fear God, they are more likely to keep their word and treat others with kindness. In fact, [Romans 3](#), a classic chapter on sin, says that our chief sin is that we "have no fear of God at all" ([Romans 3:18](#)).

So how does fear of God, who is perfect love, take away fear? William D. Eisenhower puts it this way in his article "Fearing God" in *Christianity Today*:

Unfortunately, many of us presume that the world is the ultimate threat and that God's function is to offset it. How different this is from the biblical position that God is far scarier than the world When we assume that the world is the ultimate threat, we give it unwarranted power, for in truth, the world's threats are temporary. When we expect God to balance the stress of the world, we reduce him to the world's equal As I walk with the Lord, I discover that God poses an ominous threat to my ego, but not to me. He rescues me from my delusions, so he may reveal the truth that sets me free. He casts me down, only to lift me up again. He sits in judgment of my sin, but forgives me nevertheless. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but love from the Lord is its completion.

And, of course, the ultimate example of fear and perfect love working together is Jesus Christ. He warned us at every turn to fear God, not men—and he confirmed that in everything about his life and death. He spoke lovingly but frankly to all and didn't mince words when people needed to face their sin and repent. But he also demonstrated love beyond human understanding when he lived out his words, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends ([John 15:13](#))." With love like that, what is left to fear but God?

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether.

Psalm 33:18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him [and worship Him with awe-inspired reverence and obedience], On those who hope [confidently] in His compassion and lovingkindness,

Psalm 34:7-11 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him [with awe-inspired reverence and worship Him with obedience], And He rescues [each of] them. 8. O taste and see that the Lord [our God] is good; How blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by God] is the man who takes refuge in Him. 9. O [reverently] fear the Lord, you His saints (believers, holy ones); For to those who fear Him there is no want. 10. The young lions lack [food] and grow hungry, But they who seek the Lord will not lack any good thing. 11. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you to fear the Lord [with awe-inspired reverence and worship Him with obedience].

Psalm 66:16 Come and hear, all who fear God [and worship Him with awe-inspired reverence and obedience], And I will tell what He has done for me.

Psalm 85:9 Surely His salvation is near to those who [reverently] fear Him [and obey Him with submissive wonder], That glory [the manifest presence of God] may dwell in our land.

Psalm 111:10 **The [reverent] fear of the Lord is the beginning (the prerequisite, the absolute essential, the alphabet) of wisdom; a good understanding and a teachable heart are possessed by all those who do the will of the Lord; his praise endures forever.**

Psalm 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear and worship Him [with awe-inspired reverence and obedience]; he also will hear their cry and will save them.

Psalm 147:11 **The Lord favors those who fear and worship Him [with awe-inspired reverence and obedience], those who wait for His mercy and lovingkindness.**

Proverbs 1:7 **The [reverent] fear of the Lord [that is, worshiping Him and regarding Him as truly awesome] is the beginning and the preeminent part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but arrogant fools despise [skillful and godly] wisdom and instruction and self-discipline.**

Proverbs 1:29 Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord [that is, obeying Him with reverence and awe-filled respect]

Proverbs 2:4-5 **If you seek skillful and godly wisdom as you would silver And search for her as you would hidden treasures; 5 Then you will understand the [reverent] fear of the Lord [that is, worshiping Him and regarding Him as truly awesome] and discover the knowledge of God.**

Proverbs 8:13 "The [reverent] fear and worshipful awe of the Lord includes the hatred of evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.

Proverbs 9:10 The [reverent] **fear of the Lord** [that is, worshiping Him and regarding Him as truly awesome] **is the beginning and the preeminent part of wisdom** [its starting point and its essence], and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding and spiritual insight.

Proverbs 10:27 The [reverent] fear of the Lord [worshiping, obeying, serving, and trusting Him with awe-filled respect] prolongs one's life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.

Proverbs 14:26-27 In the [reverent] fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will [always] have a place of refuge. 27 The [reverent] fear of the Lord [that leads to obedience and worship] is a fountain of life, so that one may avoid the snares of death.

Proverbs 15:33 The [reverent] **fear of the Lord** [that is, worshiping Him and regarding Him as truly awesome] **is the instruction for wisdom** [its starting point and its essence]; **and before honor comes humility.**

Luke 1:50 - "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

Luke 18:1 - Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought.

Lu 23:40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you **not even fear God**, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

Ac 10:2 a devout man, and one who **feared God** with all his household, and gave many alms to the [Jewish] people, and prayed to God continually.

Ac 13:16 And Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, he said, "Men of Israel, and you who **fear God**, listen:

Ac 13:26 "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who **fear God**, to us the word of this salvation is sent out.

1Pe 2:17 Honor all men; love the brotherhood, **fear God**, honor the king.

Re 14:7 and he said with a loud voice, "**Fear God**, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Ro 3:18 "THERE IS **NO FEAR OF GOD** BEFORE THEIR EYES."

2Co 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the **fear of God**.

Mt 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but **rather fear Him** who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Lu 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, **Fear him**.

Ac 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the **fear of the Lord**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

2Co 5:11 Therefore knowing the **fear of the Lord**, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

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**.

Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the **fear of God**.

Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, **with fear and trembling**, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Php 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**.

Col 3:22 Servants, obey in all things [your] masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, **fearing God**:

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.

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**:

1Pe 2:17 Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. **Fear God**. Honour the king.

Re 15:4 "Who will **not fear**, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed."