

Getting Started

“There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18)

Read Psalm 14, Psalm 36 and compare with Romans 3:10-18. Paul strings together a series of Old Testament quotations that indict the character (3:10-12), conversation (3:13-14), and conduct (3:15-18) of all men. Multiple times he uses terms such as “no one” and “all” to show the universality of human sin and rebellion.

- Why do you think Paul chose to reference Psalms 14 and 36 at this point in Romans?
- Share the different ways you have heard “the fear of God” or “the fear of the Lord” defined.
- What are some examples of how our world lacks the fear of God?
- What are some practical examples of when we have lived in a manner or made choices that demonstrated that we had no fear of God before your eyes?

Discussion

This question was asked on GotQuestions.org: *What does it mean to have the fear of the Lord?*

Read and respond to the posted response. What do you agree with? What would you add to this response?

Answer: *For the unbeliever, the fear of God is the fear of the judgment of God and eternal death, which is eternal separation from God (Luke 12:5; Hebrews 10:31). For the believer, the fear of God is something much different. The believer's fear is reverence of God. Hebrews 12:28-29 is a good description of this: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.’” This reverence and awe is exactly what the fear of God means for Christians. This is the motivating factor for us to surrender to the Creator of the Universe.*

Proverbs 1:7 declares, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.” Until we understand who God is and develop a reverential fear of Him, we cannot have true wisdom. True wisdom comes only from understanding who God is and that He is holy, just, and righteous. Deuteronomy 10:12, 20-21 records, “And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.” The fear of God is the basis for our walking in His ways, serving Him, and, yes, loving Him.

Some redefine the fear of God for believers to “respecting” Him. While respect is definitely included in the concept of fearing God, there is more to it than that. A biblical fear of God, for the believer, includes understanding how much God hates sin and fearing His judgment on sin—even in the life of a believer. [Hebrews 12:5-11](#) describes God’s discipline of the believer. While it is done in love ([Hebrews 12:6](#)), it is still a fearful thing. As children, the fear of discipline from our parents no doubt prevented some evil actions. The same should be true in our relationship with God. We should fear His discipline, and therefore seek to live our lives in such a way that pleases Him.

Believers are not to be scared of God. We have no reason to be scared of Him. We have His promise that nothing can separate us from His love ([Romans 8:38-39](#)). We have His promise that He will never leave us or forsake us ([Hebrews 13:5](#)). Fearing God means having such a reverence for Him that it has a great impact on the way we live our lives. The fear of God is respecting Him, obeying Him, submitting to His discipline, and worshipping Him in awe.

- Share 1-2 areas in your life that may need to change to better reflect that you have the “fear of God” before your eyes.
- Additional notes and points that you took away from Pastor John’s message ...

Prayer