

Should I live in the "fear of the Lord"?

Answers to Questions Concerning the Restored Gospel from HisWorkmanship.net

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Question: [Should I live in the "fear of the Lord"?](#)

Answer(s)

Yes. References to the *fear of the Lord* are found throughout scripture. Statements such as, "*In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence,*" and "*The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,*" are suggestive of a constructive principle, not a destructive or negative one. This is because *the fear of the Lord* involves our yielding to God as the sole or chief motivating factor in our lives, a positive factor that directs our approach to how we live our lives, including our beliefs and actions. This is in direct opposition to allowing other people and our circumstances dictate how we live or react to life. The fear of the Lord sets us free from the dictates of peer pressure, for example, and from the *winds of doctrine* that tend to drive us in destructive directions.

As opposed to fearing other people, the fear of the Lord involves keeping our focus on the Lord and how He thinks and views life, i.e. by keeping Him and His ways foremost in our thoughts. Living in *the fear of the Lord* involves being *preoccupied* with what God thinks of our conversations, actions, intents, and thoughts – as opposed to being *preoccupied* with what other people may think about us, our words, or our behavior.

To illustrate this practical understanding, think of your past conversations with people you like and respect, whose friendship you value and wish to keep. Note any tendencies to be careful how you phrase your statements, perhaps to be agreeable to retain their approval. With such people we may also be tempted to say things we would not say otherwise, e.g. to shade the truth or use language that we do not ordinarily use, or to even put down other people or things that the individuals in the group we wish to impress do not favor, etc., all in an effort to maintain a relationship with them.

Next, consider conversations you may have had with those you wish to gain as friends. In such cases, there may be a tendency to exaggerate or shade the truth that may help you win a relationship or to avoid conflict or embarrassment.

Further, consider how you may have carefully framed your words around those you do not trust or those who have hurt you. In such cases there may be a tendency to speak in a guarded manner, even to the point of covering up your true feelings.

In each of these situations, our circumstances can dictate our response and patterns of behavior. When they do, we are driven to conform to the will of those around us, allowing

ourselves to become dependent upon what others may think, or at least what we believe they may think.

The fear of the Lord frees us of such dependencies and forces. In contrast to having our behaviors so motivated and controlled by others, when the fear of the Lord operates in our lives we fix our thoughts upon God and His word. We place what and how God thinks about a matter as the foundation of our conversation rather than serve others by attempting to please them in a manner we believe will please them.

The fear of the Lord is to place God first in our thoughts. It is to think more highly of His thoughts than the thoughts of our friends, those we wish to impress, and our enemies.

With the fear of the Lord operating in our lives, we are more concerned with God's thoughts about us than what people may think about us. Thus we become more consistent in our attitudes towards others. Our thoughts and actions become motivated, not by the fear of others, but by faith in God and His integrity and wisdom. The basis of our judgments becomes founded on principles He teaches: justice, mercy and humility, wisdom, and sound judgment. More on this topic is provided in the following articles:

- Practicing the Fear of the Lord
- Enoch had the Testimony that He Pleas'd God
- Paul: One Who Chose to Please God Rather than Men
- "How are You Treating the World?" vs. "How is the World Treating You?"

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