
Understanding Worship Part 6

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Worship Means We Are to Fear our Lord

Psalm 65:13; 79:13; 95:6-7; Proverbs 1:7; 3:5; John 4:23

We are to “*Fear God.*” This means we are to reverence God as our Lord, not as an afterthought, when it is convenient or to regard as just as a “pal.” This is a principle aspect of worship we must take seriously and heed. We are to come before God in this way, along with humbleness (1 Pet. 5:6). We bring Him our endearment and respect with more meaning, power, and intensity. This is the reverence and awe of God before His holiness that He seeks (Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7; 3:5; 8:13; 9:10; 16:6; 31:30; Psalm 2:11; 34:11; 111:10; Isa. 12:6; Eccl. 12: 13; Mal. 1:14; Matt. 10: 27-33; Rom. 2:11; James 2:1). It does not mean we are afraid of Him; rather, we are fearful of His wrath and in awe of His presence (Matt. 11:28; Rom. 3).

The book of Proverbs states that the fear of God is the foundation of learning and growing, as Jesus confirmed in Matthew 10:27—33, making this precept clear. Fear helps us focus on Him, realizing His awesome holiness and our unworthiness. It enables us to grow away from our personal doubts and distractions into the embrace of His wonder. Then, we can bring Him a respectful attitude, one of wonder and admiration, and there is nothing that can hold us back from proclaiming His praise. Fear, in the context of the Matthew passage, helps us see how He loves us too. When we understand that we are precious in His sight, and that His deep love for us is true and real, we will have no need to drag along our anchors of dread and apprehension. We can let go and allow Him to reign and be Lord over us as our loving Father. We have to learn how much He indeed cares for us so we can trust Him even more to take us beyond what holds us back in life. In this way we can go deeper with Him, be able to use the gifts He brings, and take advantage of the opportunities that come. This fear of God will so infuse us with love that we will passionately desire to proclaim Him from the roof and mountaintops, as in *Praise God!*

Fear is how we are to come before God. Our word for “respect” is a frail comparison to its Hebrew and Greek equivalent. Thus, “fear” is used instead of “respect” or “reverence” in most English translations. In Proverbs and other Jewish wisdom literature, *the fear of God* is a foundational theme that we in the evangelical world have either forgotten or replaced with platitudes and ideas that fail in comparison. Too many of us have forsaken this necessity for true worship. However, realizing that the *fear of the LORD* is also the loving reverence for God that contains our love for Him may help us understand. This helps us embrace our submission to His Lordship of our lives, and causes us to keep His precepts and Word (Eccl. 12: 13).

Fear also means that God is God. He is our *King* (Mal. 1:14); therefore, we can and should see Him also as our *friend* (John 14). We should see Who He is in total character, not only as a friend, but also His position and power in the universe so we will stand in awe of Him and worship Him (Psalm 2:11; Isa. 12:6). *Fearing* God will also cause us to be fulfilled and content by being in Him (Job 28:28)!

What happens when we do not have a fear of God? It means we do not respect Him and continue to place ourselves first. Proverbs tells us that this is the attitude of a *fool*! These are also the *reprobates* in Romans, chapter one, who trust in themselves and not God, who hate knowledge and correction. They seek distortion and destruction of themselves and others. They stir others to strife and contention, totally opposite of what we are to do on this earth (Prov. 1:22; 1:31-23; 5:12; 12:1; 14:1; 11; 20:3; 28:26; 29:11)!

This fear and reverence we must have for our Lord Jesus Christ must emerge in the workings of our life and in the uttering that we proclaim in lifestyles, convictions, and proclamations. We are to learn, grow, and pass on to others what we have learned. Whether we are a pastor or a new Christian, we all have the responsibility to proclaim Christ by whatever means, opportunities, or manner in which we have been called and gifted. We are to add to God's holiness, and point to His dignity as we proclaim His glory.

The goal of the Christian life is our wondrous fear/friendship with Christ and our worship of Him! We start with Him, and we end well with Him. We are to know and pursue Him and receive His election. He is the One we are to follow and praise, not the world and its ways that lead to distraction and destruction. This is the wonder of simplicity that is to fulfill and sustain us. Our value and worth are real and depend on who we are in Christ. We are wonderfully made, and made to proclaim Him. We are to embrace His love and let it flow to others from our "rooftop." This is whom we are, our identity that will keep us firm in Him and will fuel our passion and distinction. God will not be merely for our convenience; rather He will be our Lord. (He already is; it is our view of Him that changes.) That, in turn, changes our lives for the better. We can truly walk with Him faithfully and not be pretenders who only flatter Christ with their lips on Sundays and walk with the world and the devil on Monday (Isa 29:13; Gal. 5: 16-21). Passion that is grown from our faith and Fruit will encourage our devotion that will feed our walk in Him.

Questions to Ponder

Read Psalm 65:13; 79:13; 95:6-7; Proverbs 1:7; 3:5; John 4:23

1. What happens when we do not have a fear of God?
2. What is the goal of the Christian life for you? What should it be?
3. What does it mean to you to *Fear God*? How can this attitude focus you more on worship?
4. We are to come before God in what ways, along with humbleness?
5. What happens to your spiritual growth and impact to others when your reverence to God as your Lord, becomes an afterthought? What can you do to make Christ your forethought?

6. When have you been in awe of God's presence? How did it make you feel? What can you do to encourage this on more?
7. What does it mean to be in reverence and awe of God? Why is this important to come before His holiness? Why does God seek reverence? Why does He deserve it?
8. How does *fear* helps you focus on Christ? Have you realized His awesome holiness and your unworthiness when you fear of the Lord?
9. What does it mean to you to identify in His purpose and will, not in yours?
10. What can you do to grow away from your personal doubts and distractions into the embrace of His wonder?
11. What do you need to do better for our Lord Jesus Christ to emerge in the workings of your life, lifestyle, convictions, and proclamations?
12. What can your church leadership do to inspire and teach its people a more respectful attitude to God in worship? How would this affect your church?

Principle Passages on Worship: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 50; Psalm 65:13; 79:13; 95:6-7; 100; 150; Matthew 4:10; 2:2,11; 14:33; John 4:23; 9:35-38; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 4

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