

The Fear of God

1 John 4:17-18

By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

Hebrews 12:28-29

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Luke 5:4-11

And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Exodus 20:18-20

¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

"God's grace in Christ is the refuge from God's wrath outside of Christ. There is terror outside of Christ, and there is a different kind of trembling inside of Christ."

John Piper

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

"Many in the church were in legalism ditch years ago. In those days holiness centered around man-made lifestyle requirements that were unscriptural. They preached a false gospel of salvation by works. It was terrible bondage and led many to resentment and some even leaving the faith. A major revelation delivered us from this horrible trench: God is a good God. Our heavenly Father's love became real and pulled many out of this ditch of legalism.

But we did what human beings often do-we determined to get so far from the legalistic trench that we strayed to the opposite side and fell into the lawlessness ditch. This ditch ensnares us into believing we are saved by an unscriptural grace that permits us to live no differently than the rest of the world-we can now live according to the desires that stem from our senses rather than a crucified life that draws from the power of Christ within. This is a lie that prevents many from experiencing the presence, blessing, and power of God."

John Bevere

Genesis 22:11-12

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

Exodus 1:15-21

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Genesis 39:6-9

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

"I would like to suggest that the Church become a place of terror again; a place where God continually has to tell us, "Fear not"; a place where our relationship with God is not a simple belief or doctrine or theology, it is God's burning presence in our lives. I am suggesting that the tame God of relevance be replaced by the God whose very presence shatters our egos into dust, burns our sin into ashes, and strips us naked to reveal the real person within. The Church needs to become a gloriously dangerous place where nothing is safe in God's presence except us. Nothing—including our plans, our agendas, our priorities, our politics, our money, our security, our comfort, our possessions, our needs. Our world is tired of people whose God is tame. It is longing to see people whose God is big and holy and frightening and gentle and tender...and ours; a God whose love frightens us into His strong and powerful arms where He longs to whisper those terrifying words, "I love you."

Mike Yaconelli