

I was asked by Don Hoover to take a closer look at the concept of "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" which is Ps. 111:10

I broke it down into parts, and started with the first half of the phrase: What is '*The Fear of the Lord*'?

Over the next several days I studied each mention of 'The fear of the Lord, The fear of God; God-fearing in the Bible. I asked the Holy Spirit to give me His understanding of that phrase" *The Fear of the Lord*".

On the surface, it would appear that '*The Fear of the Lord* means **being afraid** of the power of God, the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the justice of God, the 'eye for an 'eye-ness' of God's retribution. **These are some of God's attributes that lead people to fear Him.** It's these scary attributes of God's character that cause many surfacy believers not to trust God, but rather, *to fear God.*

(Maybe you remember one of the most famous lines from C.S. Lewis' "*The Tales of Narnia*", where Lucy is curious about the mysterious Lion King, Aslan, whose distant roar strikes terror into the heart. She asks, "Is he safe," and the reply comes back, "no, He is not safe, but He is **good**.) My thoughts about the meaning of the phrase, *The Fear of God* were similar to C.S.Lewis' analysis of Aslan.

Did you happen to notice that I have switched from the phrase "*The fear of the Lord*", used in Psalm 111:10, *to the Fear of God*, used mostly in the Old Testament!

I have come to believe that '*The fear of God*' and the *Fear of the Lord* are **two different things!**

Here's an example of the use of the phrase, "*The Fear of God*", from the Old Testament in 2nd Chron 20:29-30

29 "*The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.* 30 *And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.*"

Use the Bible

Q. - what is going on here? What is *The fear of God*, mentioned here?

Q. - What is the meaning of the all caps name of God used here LORD?

A. - YHWH, God Almighty (versus *the 'Lord'*"The sovereign God')

The Old Testament concept of "*The Fear of God*. Some observations . . .

**"The Fear of God."**

- It comes upon you from outside of you
- it's a real thing, bigger than men; it's from God (supernatural)
- it is frightening, and has the power to harm you
- you want to escape it
- it changes your thinking and your plans **and your behavior from the outside-in.**

**"The terror of God" is also a very real O.T. concept, just more intense than 'The Fear of God'**  
Gen 35:4-5

*"5 Then they set out, (from the Oaks at Shechem) and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them."* (When Jacob flees Laban.)

Any believer who understands that (1) God is the judge of the world that He has created, (2) that God's attributes include **truth**-the basis for justice and retribution, (3) and that He alone is to be worshipped, can look at this God and understand :"**What a fearful thing it would be to fall into the hands of the Living God!**" (Hebrews 10:31) So: **God is to be feared because He is fearful.**  
This is **the O.T. understanding of the Fear of God.**

Let's go back to Proverbs 1:7,

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Hmm, **The Fear of the Lord . . .***

**Q. - What is the difference between *The fear of God* (O.T. style,) and *The fear of the Lord*, a concept found in both the Old and the New Testament?**

Well, **can Jesus be your God but not your Lord?** Having *the fear of God* is motivated by respect and knowledge of God, but it is impersonal and objective, based on observation. But, having *the Fear of the Lord* is motivated by the Holy Spirit within you, functioning as an explainer of the truth of God.

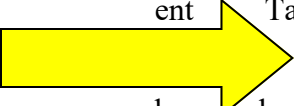
**Tell the story of my salvation moment.**

When I went from **understanding with my mind** that *Jesus is God*, to believing and knowing in my heart that *Jesus is my Lord*. I moved from *the fear of God* which is **externally** applied, to *the fear of the Lord*, which is internally applied and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Only then did I begin to have a healthy *Fear-of-the-Lord!* *And then, I began to gain knowledge and understanding.*

*Then I realized it was all true: the Bible, the stories, the promises, the claims of Christ, new life within me— all true! This knowledge God gave me was the beginning of understanding . This **truth would**, through God's subsequent *training, trials, tribulations* and *triumphs* , enlarge and inform my position as one who lives under '*The Fear of the Lord*'.*

**When you move Jesus into his rightful place as the Lord and Master of your life, you come *under the fear of the Lord*, and both, your *understanding and your wisdom, GROW!***

**Think of your years at home, your growing up years.** How many times did your Father tell you to not do this, or to do that? How many times did your mother chew you out for your thoughtless words or unkind deeds? Can you hear their voices even today? Believe it or not, those Parent Tapes are still running in the background, no matter what your age.



They determine-to this very day– many of our responses to life and many of our behavior choices. You see, our understanding of rules and fairness, of behaviors and consequences, punishments and restitutions ,etc., all run in the background like an operating system on a computer. **We are constantly being conformed to the image that our parents created for us, or in the case of our conversion, that God has created for us.** We function very much in the fear of our parents, or the fear of the Lord, or both.

If you were raised Christian, you have the huge advantage that what you were taught, even if sometimes mis-guided, came under the general heading of "*The fear of the Lord*". The '*fear of the Lord*' is like God's DOS system-it's always running in the background.

Micah says it operates like this:

*"He has shown you, Oh man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To Act Justly, to Love Mercy  
And To walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*

After God has his operating system up and running in you, (your *fear of the Lord* system) **the**

**Holy Spirit is constantly at work,**

- (1) sorting truth from untruth,
- (2) briefing you on what are best choices,
- (3) correcting you, and
- (4) working in you so you become more conformed to the likeness of the Son. .

.” (Romans 8:29) You have an automatic guidance system. It sets limits and boundaries and reinforces good behaviors. The term, *‘The fear of God’* no longer is applicable for you. **You now operate under *the fear of the Lord* - your Lord!**

**Here’s how it works, says Isaiah:**

*“Although the Lord brings the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden from you no more. With your own eyes you shall see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice in your ear saying, ‘This is the way: walk I it!’*  
(Isa.30:20)

**Here’s what it looks like, says David . . .**

*“Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup.  
You have made my lot secure.  
The boundary lines for me have fallen in pleasant places.  
Surely I have a delightful inheritance.  
I will praise the Lord who counsels me;  
Even at night my heart instructs me.”*  
*Psalm 16:5-7*

Now, what is happening in you is described in Proverbs 1:7: ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*** God has given you a gift, *the fear of the Lord*. With it comes knowledge.

And God has given you a second gift, as described in Psalm 111:10 : ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”***

**Q. - Are wisdom and knowledge the same thing?**

**A. - No. They are not used interchangeably in the Bible.** They are two different kinds of understanding: one is the accumulation of data, while the other is knowing how to use that data and apply it effectively to the work of the building of the Kingdom of God .

This is the work to which you and I have now been called. And as we operate out of that safe zone—the *‘fear-of-the-Lord’* zone where God does His work transforming us as he protects us and increases our peace, and gives us new eyes to see Kingdom understandings.

To understand the difference between knowledge and wisdom consider this:

tomato

You may know that **a tomato is actually not a vegetable**, but a fruit. (That’s knowledge) . But knowing that, you still don’t put a tomato in a fruit salad—*that’s wisdom*.

egg shells

You may know that an egg shell is quite edible—even nourishing. It is made of calcium carbonate crystals, and contains many useful minerals like potassium and magnesium. *But wisdom will tell you, “Don’t throw those egg shells into that omelet you are making!*

Don't we all know **people who have heads full of knowledge**, but they lack wisdom. They're really smart, but they are woefully unable to draw the wisdom out of the vast amounts of data (knowledge) they have collected.

Your knowledge and wisdom are at work in you all the time, and under the fear of God within you they are increasing. For example, Proverbs 8:13 tells us that *"To fear the Lord is to hate evil."* Your *'fear-of-the-Lord-filters'* work in the background to inform and grow your knowledge of the Lord and His ways. They help you to love God, hate sin; do good, avoid evil; hurt no one, heal broken ones; do not take, give.

Think of having ***the fear of the Lord*** at work in you like this: there is one kind of animal that is so highly social, and so socially relational that it doesn't need a fence. It only needs a shepherd. If a sheep can see the shepherd, it is content, and it needs no fence! But if the shepherd disappears, the sheep don't know how to survive and they wander, lost.

Dogs run off chasing rabbits; cattle wander off, grazing wherever the good grass grows. Ducks and geese spook and fly away with no thought of how to return to a safe pond.

But you and I, we are like the sheep. We have a system at work in us that was put there by our creator/master/ shepherd, **and it is called *'The fear of the Lord'***. *It leads to us having KINGDOM learning, understanding, knowledge and wisdom. Let's Relax and be grateful for it!*

### **Ten ways the fear of the Lord within you can change you:**

(1) *"Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."*

*21 The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was." Ex 20:20-21,*

**Q.** - What will the fear of God help the Israelites not do?

(2) *3 "The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me:*

*'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God,*

*4 he is like the light of morning at sunrise" 2 Sam 23:3-4*

*The Fear of the Lord . . .*

A supernaturally given, healthy, deep-rooted, far-reaching respect for the Person, Character and Power of God, resulting in an unwavering desire to hear, obey and please Him and His Son.

**Q.** - If your leadership over your company or family is done in the fear of the Lord, what effect will it have ?

(3) *There is no fear of God before his eyes.*

A supernaturally given, healthy, deep-rooted, far-reaching respect for the Person, character and power of God, resulting in an unwavering desire to hear, obey and please God and His Son.

2 *For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.* Ps 36:1-2

**Q.** - What can stop your fear of the Lord to become corrupted or useless?

(4) Rom 3:17-18

17 "and the way of peace they do not know: 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

**Q.** - What happens when there is no fear of the Lord in the way you lead?

(5) 10 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding."* Ps 111:10

**Q.** - God will add what to your life when you follow His precepts?

(6) 10 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.*

**Q.** - What will living in the fear of the Lord do for your birthdays? Prov. 9:10-11

(7) *"The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.* Prov

**Q.** - What is the secret to not being stressed by your circumstances? **Prov.** 19:23

(8) 4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life. Prov 22:4

**Q.** - What other trait does God equate with fear of the Lord? What 3 benefits come with it?

(9) 6 *He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.* Isa 33:6

**Q.** - What is the key to treasures like a sure foundation and salvation?

(10) 31 *Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.* Acts 9:31

**Q.** - Why did the church experience a time of peace?

