



The Caller

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Confidence Corner

In this week's Confidence Corner we want to examine some thoughts on the Old Testament concept of fear. A number of passages address the concept of fear. Some passages equate feelings experienced with fear like shaking and trembling (Dt. 2:25; Micah 7:17). In passages where trembling is found, there is also implied a sense of being short of breath. Some when they are afraid are described as having hearts that melt (Dt. 1:28). Exodus 15:16 describes the person who is afraid, as being frozen in fear and quiet and still.

The Hebrew term which most often translated by "to fear" or "to be afraid" is found 419 times in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. 150 of these times the "fear" is of other people. Ecclesiastes 12:5 speaks of a fear of heights and Dt. 1:19 speaks of the desert as a "fearful" place. But a majority speak in relation to a fear of God.

Rudolph Otto in his work, *The Idea of the Holy*, describes the concept of the fear of God in very interesting ways. People who fear God feel nothingness in contrast to the holy God who is supreme above all. He describes those who fear God as feeling the absolute "overpoweringness" of the divine. In another place, he describes the person who fears God as being in a stupor before something Who is wholly other than a man."

In a time when we have a tendency to water down what the "fear of God" includes, it is no wonder the world, and especially American see little need for a fear of God (see inside article). Like many other concepts of our great God, we have made the concepts more palatable for mankind at the expense of God. When we do this, we only hurt ourselves and others.

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Luke 18:1

Sunday's Sermons:

A. M. — Nobody Likes a Show-Off

Mark 12:38-39

P. M. — Man vs. God: Thinking

1 Corinthians

I'm Not Fearing Anything!

In ladies' class today I was sharing with the women some thoughts on the fear of God. Specifically, I mentioned how I wondered if our American response to fear has hindered people's ability to properly fear and accept God. In some cultures, it is a sign of respect for individuals to tell stories regarding fearful situations they faced in life. Yes, you read that correctly—people are respected because they admitted they had feared. In America, quite the opposite is often true.

Americans for years have suggested that people need to have no fear. The mantras ring forth of “fearless this” or “fearless that.” When someone admits they are afraid they are a “scaredy-cat,” “chicken,” “pansy,” or “sissy.” When John McCain's daughter spoke at his funeral she noted what she thought was a characteristic of an American man. She said, “As a girl, I didn't appreciate what I most fully appreciate now—how he suffered and how he bore it all with a stoic silence that was once the mark of an American man.” I must admit, that is quite a tribute and as an American, it makes me proud. But I wonder how much of this avoidance of fear that permeates American culture might hinder people from having the proper fear for God. They do not care about God or His message because there is no fear of God—hey there is no fear at all!

Think of the slippery slope that occurs when Americans decide that they will have no fear. If we fear anything, even God, we might be viewed as weak. I'm no chicken or sissy—no way! But then we do not receive the benefit that can come from proper fear.

We will fear no one. We will fear no other world power. We will fear nothing—not even God. With no fear of God, there is no objective standard in which to turn for morals. With no objective standard of right and wrong, we falsely believe we as Americans can do whatever we want and God will look down and smile.

We kill babies at an alarming rate—a disgustingly alarming rate. But wait, we do not fear God so we do not have any sense of consequence. Since we no longer fear God, we no longer look to His Word for marriage. In the '70s and beyond people have been divorcing their spouses at an alarming rate—but we do not fear God so we don't give it a second thought. Then as that moral standard fell, since there is no fear of God, why not repackage what is an abomination to God to be a loving relationship, and while we are at it, why not make it legal to marry a same-sex partner? Trust me, in no time we will be legalizing underage marriage to be accepting of the pedophile. But hey we are America and we fear no one and nothing.

Maybe it is time we wake up as a nation. Maybe it is time we, as Christians, get serious about showing and sharing God with the world—include the need to fear God. The wisest of all human kings once said that the conclusion of the whole matter was to fear God and keep His commandments.

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