

“Kiss ye the Son” Psalm 2

1. Simplistic Fear

Description: Fear rooted in human instincts or circumstances, often reflecting a lack of trust in God. It's a fear of punishment, not of God - can come because of simplicity, foolishness, or scorning.

Example:

- Abraham's deception in Gerar, assuming no “fear of God” existed (Gen. 20:11).
- See also Ps. 36:1, Rom. 3:1-19

Destroyed By:

- Lust, so we “take our chances.” (1 John 2:16)
- Delayed judgment makes man arrogant (Eccl. 8:11 ff)

Key Point: Natural fear focuses on self, not God, and fails to produce spiritual growth.

2. Judgment-based Fear

Description: Fear triggered by God's power or judgment in others (e.g., miracles, victories), but without personal conviction, it leads to resistance, anger, or superficial obedience rather than heart change.

Examples:

- Israel in the wilderness, grumbling against God out of fear of enemies (Ex. 14:11-13; Num. 14:1-9).
- God's “terror” or “hornet” causing enemies to flee without devotion (Ex. 23:27-28; Deut. 2:25, 11:25).
- Adam hiding from God (Gen. 3:10) and Israel fleeing from God's presence at Sinai (Ex. 20:18-20; Heb. 12:20).
- The servant in the Parable of the Talents, paralyzed by fear of his master (Matt. 25:24-25).
- Misguided zeal through rituals without faith (2 Kings 17:25-28; Mark 7:6-8).

Effects:

- Focuses on God's judgment, ignoring His mercy.
- Produces despair, rebellion, or begrudging compliance. (Isa. 29:13, Ez. 33:31, Matt. 15:8)
- Stems from a lack of love or understanding of God's character (1 John 4:18).
- Leads to “itching ears,” rejecting conviction (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Key Point: This fear drives people (relationally) away from God (or drives them just far enough away from their sin to hopefully “curry his favor,” focusing on His power (in judgment) without embracing His grace.

3. Meant-to-be-Temporary Fear

Description: A temporary fear of God's judgment or condemnation, sparked by awareness of sin. If guided properly, it leads to repentance; if not, it results in despair or rejection of God.

Examples:

- Philippian jailer's cry, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).
- Paul's trembling before Christ's appearance (Acts 9:4-6).
- David's conviction of sin (Ps. 51:1-4).
- Israel's lament in exile (Jer. 31:18-19; Lam. 3:7, 28-29).

Effects:

- Humbles a person, leading to repentance (Lam. 3:28-29).
- Prompts cries for mercy (Luke 18:13).
- Drives one to seek God for relief (Ps. 51).
- Causes collapse before God, acknowledging sin (Jer. 31:19).

Risk: If not nurtured into faith, this fear becomes "ungodly," leading to despair (e.g., Judas, Matt. 27:3-5).

Key Point: Temporary fear is constructive if it leads to repentance but destructive if it collapses into hopelessness.

Outcome: Godly Fear

Description: Godly fear is reverential awe and love for God, resulting in transformation through forgiveness and adoption. It replaces fear of condemnation with trust and relationship.

Outcomes:

- **New Jurisdiction:** Forgiveness removes condemnation (Rom. 8:1).
- **New Relationship:** Adoption replaces fear with sonship (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 2:19-22).
- **New Identity:** Believers are no longer strangers but part of God's household (Eph. 2:19).
- **Assurance:** The Spirit confirms forgiveness, fostering ongoing reverence (Ps. 111:10; Acts 9:31).

Example:

- Samuel's encouragement: Despite sin, turn to God with faith, not fear that turns aside (1 Sam. 12:20).
- David's restoration after repentance, trusting God's mercy (Ps. 51:12-17).

Key Point: Godly fear transforms the heart, aligning actions with faith and producing lasting devotion to God.

Summary

- **Simplistic Fear** distracts from God, driven by self-centered desires.
- **Judgment-based Fear** repels those who see His power but reject His grace.
- **Meant-to-be-Temporary Fear** can lead to repentance or despair, depending on response.
- **Godly Fear** fosters reverence, forgiveness, and a new relationship with God.

Reflection: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10). True fear of God leads to **faith**, **love**, and **transformation**, moving us from **condemnation to adoption**.

Adapted from John Bunyan’s “A Treatise on the Fear of God,” ch. 3 - he identifies four types of fear and a fourth, “proper” fear where they should all point.