WHAT IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD?

BILLY JOE DAUGHERTY

Copyright © 1990
Billy Joe Daugherty,
Victory Christian Center
All Rights Reserved
Printed in USA
Second Printing 1992
ISBN 1-56267-005-0

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the author.

All Scriptures contained herein, unless otherwise noted, are from the New King James Version of the Bible, copyright 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

For more information and/or a complete listing of Pastors Billy Joe and Sharon Daugherty's books and tapes write:

Victory Christian Center
7700 South Lewis
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74136-7700
(918)493-1700

The Fear of the Lord

BY
BILLY JOE DAUGHERTY

Contents

1 "What is 'the Fear of the Lord'?".....5

2 "Fear of Man".....9

3 "Fear of Death".....11

4 "Fear Not".....13

5 "Fear of the Lord is Not Talking Ugly!".....15

6 "Fear of the Lord Causes You to Run From Evil".....17

7 "Fear of the Lord Causes You to Seek Peace".....21

8 "Fear of the Lord Causes God to Move on Your Behalf".....23

9 "Fear of the Lord Prolongs Your Days".....25

10 "Fear of the Lord Sets Stage for Abundant Life".....27

11 "No Fear of the Lord".....29

12 "Without the Law, Man Knows Right From Wrong".....31

13 "Sexual Perversion: Result of Not Fearing the Lord".....35

14 "Restoration of Godly Fear".....39

15 "Balance Between Love and Fear".....41

16 "It's Time to Jerk Out the Slack".....43

Personal Prayer of Commitment.....47

Chapter 1
"What is 'the Fear of the Lord'?"

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

—2 Corinthians 7:1

"Filthiness of the flesh" includes wrong attitudes, actions, activities, and feelings. Holiness comes as a result of the fear of God. It is produced as a consequence of the fear of the Lord.

The Greek word for *fear* is PHOBOS, which means "that which is caused by being scared; that which may cause fright, dread, or terror; that which is caused by the intimidation of adversaries."

W. E. Vine says, "A reverential fear of God...is not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, *but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him.* The reverential fear of God will inspire a constant carefulness in dealing with others."[1]

In other words, to "fear the Lord" is to have so much

reverence and respect for Him **that *your greatest desire is to please Him.***

Philippians 2:12 says, **"...work out your own salvation *with fear and trembling."***

First Peter 2:17 says, **"Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."**

Cornelius was a Gentile, but he feared God. His desire was to please God. Acts 10:2 says Cornelius was **"A devout man and one who *feared God* with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always."**

God spoke to Cornelius:

> **"...Cornelius!**
>
> **"And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, 'What is it, lord?' So he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.**
>
> **"'Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.**
>
> **"'He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.'"**
>
> **—Acts 10:3-6**

Peter went to Cornelius' house, and all those at the house received Christ immediately.

They were baptized in the Holy Spirit and then baptized in water.

Ephesians 5:21 talks about the *"fear of God."* **"Submitting to one another in the fear of God."** If we don't fear God, we'll never submit ourselves one to another. The fear of God will precede the humble, broken, contrite spirit that produces a submission one to another.

Revelation 19:5 says, **"...'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!'"**

Hebrews 11:7 says, **"By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household..."**

Noah moved with obedience and reverence (fear of the Lord), because he had heard from God. Scripture says it was **by faith that he moved with fear.**

Most people have difficulty when you mention the word fear, because we've been programmed to "fear not." But to move in the fear of the Lord is to move with respect, reverence, and an overwhelming desire to obey God and please Him.

Chapter 2
"Fear of Man"

Many New Testament Scriptures say something about "fear not"

Second Timothy 1:7 says, **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."**

The fear God speaks of in this verse comes from the same Greek word, PHOBOS, as fear of the Lord. It means "to be afraid, to be frightened, to be in terror." It also includes the thought, "to revere or be in awe of."

This particular Scripture is in the context of a letter written by Paul to Timothy. Timothy was afraid of giving his testimony. He was afraid of the Gospel and what its impact would be. So Paul said, **"...Stir up the gift of God which is in you... Don't be ashamed or afraid of the testimony of the Lord, because God has not given you the spirit of fear"** (2 Timothy 1:7, paraphrased).

Of what was Timothy afraid? He wasn't afraid of God. He was afraid of man. He was afraid of what man would do and say and think. God doesn't give us a man-fearing spirit. Neither are we to fear the devil in the sense

of being afraid or in terror of him. He's to be in terror of us!

Chapter 3
"Fear of Death"

Hebrews 2:14-15 speaks of the fear of death.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

"And release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has freed us from the fear of death. We're not to be afraid of death, because we know when we depart from the physical body, we'll be present with the Lord. We'll be with Him forever!

Revelation 21:8 (KJ) says, **"But the fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone..."**

Obviously, there's a fear we're not supposed to have. An unbeliever who doesn't have a promise of life after death fears dying. He fears meeting God. Scripture says the people who are unbelieving and fearful will be cast into the lake of fire. Through receiving Jesus, the fear of death is removed.

Chapter 4
"Fear Not"

In both the Old and New Testaments when angels appeared, the first words they spoke were, **"Fear not"** In other words, "Don't get into terror" or "Don't be afraid."

The angel spoke to Zachariah in Luke 1:13. **"...Do not be afraid..."**

An angel spoke to Joseph, **"...do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit"** (Matthew 1:20).

An angel appeared to Daniel and said, **"...Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words"** (Daniel 10:12).

Isaiah 41:10 says, **"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."**

Luke 12:32 says, **"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the**

kingdom."

This type of fear that brings torment and oppression is clearly not the fear of the Lord. It is to be resisted and cast out.

Chapter 5
"Fear of the Lord is Not Talking Ugly!"

"...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

—2 Corinthians 7:1

Psalm 19:9 says, ***"The fear of the Lord* is clean, enduring forever."** This implies that people who don't have the fear of the Lord are unclean.

Psalm 34:11-12 says:

"Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you *the fear of the Lord*

"Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?"

Do you want to see life and many good days? Verse 13 tells you how to do that.

"Keep your tongue from evil, and your

lips from speaking guile."

The fear of the Lord will cause you to keep your tongue from talking ugly! Guile is that which is unclean and which is not in accordance with the Word of God. It means deceitful or cunning. Many things have uncleanness in them that aren't necessarily what we'd call socially cursing. For you to say things that contradict God's Word or that violate the principles of faith can wound your spirit and grieve the Spirit of God.

As you go through each day, it's important that you say, "Lord, I thank You that You are my Rock. You are my strength. I trust in You." It's important that you not allow your lips to fall into the confession of what's happening negatively in the world and that your lips speak no guile.

Chapter 6
"Fear of the Lord Causes You to Run From Evil"

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

—Psalm 34:14

The fear of the Lord will cause you to depart from evil.

Remember when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph and he ran from her?

"Now it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.'

"But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

"'There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How

then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

"So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

"But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside,

"That she caught him up by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.' ***But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside."***

—Genesis 39:7-12

Joseph ran from evil because *the fear of the Lord* was in him. The fear of the Lord is to **"Depart from evil, and do good..."**

Proverbs 8:13 says, ***"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil..."***

Job 28:28 says, **"...Behold,** ***the fear of the Lord,*** **that** ***is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."*** This verse says the fear of the Lord is "wisdom."

When you have the fear of the Lord in you, you'll do

what is good. You'll have wisdom. The fear of the Lord is a motivating influence that causes you not only to run from evil, but to do that which is right and good.

Chapter 7
"Fear of the Lord Causes You to Seek Peace"

The fear of the Lord will cause you to **"...seek peace, and pursue it"** (Psalm 34:14).

People who fear God will seek peace rather than strife. They'll seek to be peacemakers. Jesus said, **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God"** (Matthew 5:9).

Those who have the fear of God won't stir up strife. They won't hold onto bitterness or unforgiveness, but they'll be quick to forgive and make peace.

First John 4:18 says, ***"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.*** **But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."** This verse is talking about fear of the enemy...fear that would come against you and torment you day and night and give you no peace. This type of fear would put you in bondage. However, love will cast out this fear.

Chapter 8
"Fear of the Lord Causes God to Move on Your Behalf

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."

—Psalm 34:15

The consequence of fearing the Lord is that His eyes are upon you, and His ears are open to your prayers!

Now, here's the contrast. **"The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth"** (Psalm 34:16).

But here's the good news:

"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit."

—Psalm 34:17-18

In this verse, a "broken heart" means a person who is humble in heart, free of pride and arrogance. He's not talking about a wounded spirit, which we sometimes refer to as a broken heart.

David continues, **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, *but the Lord delivers him out of them all"*** (Psalm 34:19). In other words, God always moves on behalf of the righteous!

Chapter 9
"Fear of the Lord Prolongs Your Days"

"The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened."

—Proverbs 10:27

Some people think, "It doesn't matter how you live, because you'll live just so many days anyway." All through the Bible, God says your days can be prolonged.

Ephesians 6:1-3 says if you honor your father and mother, you'll add days to your life.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

"Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise:

"That it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

The fear of the Lord, that overwhelming desire to please Him and obey His commands, will cause you to live a longer life.

Chapter 10
"Fear of the Lord Sets Stage for Abundant Life"

Proverbs 14:26 says, **"In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence..."** People who have a fear of the Lord in their lives will have a bold confidence in their spirit. They won't have an arrogant, puffed-up confidence, but they'll have the confidence of the Lord. This kind of confidence is part of God's abundant benefits.

Proverbs 14:27 says, ***"The fear of the Lord* is a fountain of life..."**

Proverbs 22:4 says, **"By humility and *the fear of the Lord* are riches and honor and life."** In other words, the fear of the Lord will bring a harvest into your life. It will bring God's abundance into your life.

Chapter 11
"No Fear of the Lord"

People who lack a fear of the Lord will often set themselves up as God, while those who have a fear of God will let Him be God. When you don't have a fear of God, you will break God's laws. But when you have the fear of God, it will cause you to keep His laws.

Many people say, "I respect God," but they don't fear Him to the extent that they obey His commands. Their respect is like they respect the President of the United States. It's at a distance. "You do your job, I'll do mine, and never our paths will cross!"

The devil has watered down the definition of the fear of the Lord and has tried to remove it from our minds. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy. When there is no fear of God, people will follow the devil's lies.

Romans 3:10-18 says:

"...There is none righteous, no, not one;

"There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.

"They have all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.

"Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips;

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

"Their feet are swift to shed blood;

"Destruction and misery are in their ways;

"And the way of peace they have not known.

"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

We need to get back to a healthy fear of the Lord.

Chapter 12
"Without the Law, Man Knows Right From Wrong"

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."
—Romans 1:18

This verse is talking about people who know to do right, but they don't do it. In the first two chapters of Romans, Paul explains that God has written His laws in the heavens, and therefore, it is evident to all men what is right and what is wrong.

God says men know what's right and wrong without even seeing the Bible. The principle, "What would you want people to do to you?" reveals what's right and wrong. You wouldn't want someone to murder you, so you know murder is wrong without even reading the law. You wouldn't want someone to steal your possessions, so before you ever read the Ten Commandments, you know that stealing is wrong.

"Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

"Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

"Professing to be wise, they became fools."

—Romans 1:19-22

This is exactly what happens when people lose their fear of God. They become vain in their imaginations.

Lucifer lost the fear of God, because he exalted himself in pride. In his vain imaginations, he thought he could overthrow God. That's what happens to people who don't fear God. They become deceived in their minds. They begin to think right is wrong and wrong is right.

"And changed the glory of the

incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things."

—Romans 1:23

They started worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. Do you realize there are idols in America today? We think of Babylon and Egypt as having idols, but there are people today who have idols: things which have taken the affection, the thought life, and the worship of man in place of worship of God. They are called by different names. It could be in the fashion world, the sports world, the business world, the political world, or the educational world. There are people who have gods in all of these areas, because there is no fear of God in them.

Chapter 13
"Sexual Perversion: Result of Not Fearing the Lord"

Now, here's the progression of what happens when people don't fear God.

> **"Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves."**
>
> **—Romans 1:24**

People who don't fear God will ultimately end up in sexual perversion.

> **"Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**
>
> **"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.**
>
> **"Likewise also the men, leaving the**

natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers.

"Backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.

"Undiscerning, untrustworthy unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

"Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."

—Romans 1:25-32

When men and women do not fear God, the degeneration goes to homosexuality and continues into bestiality, sodomy, and every form of uncleanness.

The fear of God will cause you to run from the very appearance of evil. Without the fear of God, people are led on a downward descent that goes farther and farther into the morass of uncleanness and evil.

Chapter 14
"Restoration of Godly Fear"

I am praying that God will restore the fear of the Lord to each of us in the name of Jesus. There are people who are playing with sin, because there's no fear of God in their lives. It's like I heard someone say, "Don't lead me into temptation. Just show me where it is." They want to get close to it.

The fear of God will make you want to run from temptation. The fear of God works on the inside of you in such a way that you know there's a recompense for sin. In other words, pay day will come. There will be an accounting of what's done.

It's like taking a test. If you know the test is coming, you're motivated to action by the fear of the Lord to study for that test.

People who don't think they will ever face God never think about how they are living. When you know you are going to stand before the Judge one day and give account, suddenly your life changes.

Chapter 15
"Balance Between Love and Fear"

There's a balance between the love of God and the fear of God. They flow together. God says, **"If you don't obey Me, how can you say you love Me?"** In other words, the love of God is that we would keep His commandments (1 John 5:3). Therefore, the love of God prompts godly fear, which in turn prompts obedience.

People who know the truth of the Word and those who know God and know about Him will give account on Judgment Day for what they knew but didn't share.

Some say, "My job isn't to witness and testify. It's just not in me. That's not my nature." The reality is that these people will one day stand in judgment because they had the truth but didn't share it with others.

If I know I am going to be held accountable for something that I'm supposed to do and I will stand before someone and answer for it, then I'm going to be motivated to do it. A lot of people don't have the fear of God in them, so they are not moved or motivated.

Noah heard there was going to be a flood. God told him to build an ark. I think Noah was moved by two

things: 1) He feared God, he obeyed God, and he loved Him. 2) He didn't want to be treading water! He knew a judgment day was coming when he'd have to do something in his flesh to pass this test and survive!

> **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**
>
> **"Knowing, therefore, *the terror of the Lord,* we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences."**
>
> **—2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

The "terror of the Lord" in Verse 11 comes from the same Greek word for fear, PHOBOS. Paul is saying, "We understand this situation. Everyone is going to stand before God and be judged for what he has done, good or bad." Paul was motivated to preach because of the fear of the Lord.

Chapter 16
"It's Time to Jerk Out the Slack"

It's time for the slack to be jerked out of those who have soft peddled sin and said, "It doesn't matter how you live." This attitude has dominated a lot of people.

If you're sleeping with someone other than your wife or husband, you're in sin. Those who commit adultery will **not** inherit the Kingdom of God. If you are living in homosexuality and you say, "I've confessed Christ, I believe in God, I've read the Bible, and I go to early morning prayer," you'll **not** inherit the Kingdom of God.

Drunkards who say, "Well, I'm not really a drunkard, I'm able to control it," have been deceived by their own imaginations. They live in a fantasy world that's filled with uncleanness and unrighteousness. God judges our hearts. He looks on the inside of us. He wants a clean heart. Those who stand before Him will be only those with clean, pure hearts.

As a minister, it's my responsibility to tell you the truth, because one day when I stand before God, I don't want Him to say, "You didn't really tell it like it is." I'm talking to you like it really is!

Jesus said:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

—Matthew 7:21-23

Jesus is saying, "You confessed lordship, but lordship wasn't a reality with you. You said I was the boss of your life, but I wasn't. I didn't rule your life."

The fear of the Lord is that **Jesus really is Lord.** The Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is clean. It's a fountain of life. It will prolong your life. The fear of the Lord produces riches and honor." I'm not talking about hanging a millstone over your head! **The fear of God is a liberating force.**

How shall we who are dead to sin live in it any longer? It's time to end it. It's time to cut off relationships that are wrong. It's time to cut out things that are unclean and impure. Jesus said, "If you will judge yourself, you will not be judged." Quit playing with unforgiveness and bitterness. Call it what it is. It's sin. Get it out in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

How much better if we would never play games with sin. Don't hold on to some sinful pattern or lifestyle. You have the power to break it. You have the authority to be loosed from it in the name of Jesus.

Let a healthy, holy, and reverential fear of the Lord fill your heart now in Jesus' name.

I break the strongholds of the enemy over your life in Jesus' name. I loose you from every foul enticement and trap of the devil. Be loosed by the authority of the name of Jesus. Demand that sin leave you. Declare, "I won't have it anymore." Be set free to receive the presence of the Lord.

Sin comes out by confession before the Lord. Just call it by name and speak it out to the Lord. If there's a lack of the fear of God, just say, "Lord, I have not had a proper fear of You. I confess it as sin, and I repent of it in Jesus' name. Lord, work Your fear in me. Holy Spirit, work in me."

Footnote

[1] Vine, W. E. *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Thomas Nelson, Publishers, P. 414.

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father, I need a fresh start in my life. I need a new beginning. Forgive me for the entanglements I've had with sin. I renounce the works of the devil, and I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I receive the cleansing power of Jesus' shed blood.

I receive Your mercy and grace, Lord, to begin a new life with a proper fear of You that motivates me to please You.

Holy Spirit, empower me and lead me into all truth so I will have the confidence and the faith to walk in newness of life in Jesus Christ.

Lord, I want my life to be a mighty demonstration of Your love, acceptance, and forgiveness, of Your power, grace, and mercy to the world. I yield my life totally to You, Lord, and I receive Your enlistment orders today! Amen.

_____

Signature

_____

Date

About the Author

Billy Joe Daugherty, Pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a soulwinner with a world vision. Graduates of Oral Roberts University, he and his wife, Sharon, have traveled extensively around the country ministering the Word of God and the love of God.

Believing that "the greatest tool of evangelism in the coming days will be the local church," Billy Joe emphasizes the ministry of the individual believer in the many outreaches of Victory Christian Center.

Billy Joe's daily radio and television programs are bringing encouragement and sound teaching into many homes.

Victory Christian Center



ISBN 1-56267-005-0