

# Do You Fear God?

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Fear, is one of the most powerful of human emotions. Fear can manifest itself in many different forms and can cause an otherwise normal person, to behave in a completely irrational manner. Fear can be a powerful means of motivation and has been used throughout history to influence, oppress, control and restrain people. Fear can even be powerful enough, to cause someone to abandon any other fears that they may have. People have entered burning buildings to retrieve loved ones, and even returned again and again, until everyone has been rescued and brought to safety, with no regard for their own well-being.

It is also possible to be so completely consumed by fear and worry; that a person can completely lose their ability to function normally. There are some people who are so fearful, that they cannot bring themselves to leave their homes. It is **not** God's desire that our lives be filled with worry and anxiety. Christ made it plain that we are not to worry and fear about the situations we may be in and of things yet to come.

## **Matthew 6:31-34**

<sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

We are also told, to not even worry and fear for our own lives:

## **Matthew 10:28-31**

<sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. <sup>30</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Our responsibility and God's promise is clear. We must make God and the pursuit of his kingdom the overriding priority in our lives, if we want to live eternally with him. Nothing must stand in the way, or interfere with that goal. But, God will not ever force us; we must all come to him willingly and obediently.

### Psalm 111:10

<sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord *is* the beginning of wisdom;  
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*.  
His praise endures forever.

Those are very **powerful** words: the fear of the Eternal. How should we, or how do we fear God? Should we cower in terror, paralyzed with fear at the mention of God's name? In Genesis 22, we find one of the most dramatic stories in the Bible. God determines to test Abraham and instructs him to perform a specific task for him:

### Genesis 22:1-2

<sup>22</sup> Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

<sup>2</sup> Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

God was well aware of how much Abraham loved and cherished his only son Isaac; he deliberately assigned Abraham a task that would test him like no other. Abraham had to choose between his son and God and which one of them was first, in order of priority, in his life. Reading further, we learn of Abraham's choice:

### Genesis 22:6-12

<sup>6</sup> So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. <sup>7</sup> But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?"

<sup>8</sup> And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

**<sup>9</sup> Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. <sup>10</sup> And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.**

**<sup>11</sup> But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"**

**So he said, "Here I am."**

**<sup>12</sup> And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me."**

Place yourself in Abraham's place, for just a moment, and try to imagine the struggle...the incredible inner turmoil he must have gone through. Imagine your cherished son lying on the altar looking up at you and your hand about to strike with the knife that will take his life and take him from you. This was a most severe and extreme trial for Abraham, but his decision had been made. His hand was on the knife and he was determined to do what God had asked of him.

Notice again what it says in verse 12: **now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me."**

Abraham trusted God, he obeyed God and he had complete and total faith in God. He was willing to perform any task that God asked of him, even to the point of sacrificing his own son and because of all this...Abraham was said to fear God.

The phrase "fear God" is not referring to a physical fear. God did not force Abraham to do as he asked. Abraham did not cower; he willingly went where God told him and set about performing the tasks asked of him. Because of his faith and trust, all of his descendants have been blessed. Abraham "feared God" and had the utmost respect for him and his position as the creator and provider of all things. God had made Himself known in a personal way to Abraham. He had taken an active role in Abraham's life. He had a very specific purpose and plan for Abraham.

Abraham had absolute and complete trust, faith, and confidence in God. God was first in Abraham's life and he obeyed him without question. Is there any point in arguing with God? Yet some do...they are not content to just follow God's law. They are unwilling to obey as Abraham did. There are those who have to constantly be challenging, modifying and reinterpreting what God's word clearly says. God did not make mistakes in what he caused to be recorded and preserved in His word!

God is not a bully, or a merciless, inflexible, uncaring tyrant. God does not force us to come to him. God calls each of us individually, and individually we must submit to and fear God. Each of us also, must have the utmost respect, reverence and respect for God, placing him in the proper place in our lives and not letting anything come between us and him and the unique relationship that exists.

At the same time, in order to properly fear God, we also must realize that there are penalties for disobedience to God's laws and failing to do as he asks. Although God is not a cruel oppressor, penalties for disobedience can be severe; in some cases we can even lose out on eternal life. God does not wish for any of us to lose out on our reward and trials and tests are designed to get our attention and also for our growth, so that we will make the proper corrections in our actions, or attitudes. We must be prepared at all times, to do anything that God may ask of us...just as Abraham, who did not question, but simply went about what God asked of him without complaint.

How would you react, if faced with the same test that God chose for Abraham? It is hard for us to actually place ourselves in that same position, to actually imagine the feelings and thoughts that must have passed through Abraham's mind at that time. What about the stress, anxiety and anguish leading up to that event. The time spent traveling and hiking up the mountain knowing what he must do once he and his son reached the place that God had selected! I do not believe anyone could know how they would react, until placed in that very circumstance; until faced with the same decisions.

Abraham had in his mind determined, from the time that God first gave him the instructions, that He was going to do as God asked him...he trusted God...he feared God. Would any of us have even begun that journey in the first place? Would we have feared God enough, would we have had the faith to place the life of one of our children in God's hands? Think about it **carefully!**

What about Noah? Noah was righteous...Noah walked with God. At that time, Noah was the only one that God could rely on to do the job at hand. Noah feared God...

### **Genesis 6:9**

**<sup>9</sup> This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.**

God also had a very special task for Noah. It was a very important and critical job, because through Noah, God would rebuild the population of the Earth, both man and beast. God set a tremendous undertaking before Noah, to build an ark, a gigantic ship that was to hold Noah and his family, plus all the animals that God wanted to repopulate the earth with after it was cleansed.

### **Genesis 6:13-16**

**<sup>13</sup> And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup> Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.**

Building the ark was a great responsibility and an enormous undertaking just on its own, but after the ark was built, there was still the job of collecting the animals that were to be spared in pairs and herding them onto the ark. Then, finally after all of that had been completed, food had to be collected and stored for all of the animals and Noah and his family!

### **Genesis 6:18-21**

**<sup>18</sup> But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark — you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. <sup>19</sup> And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup> Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive. <sup>21</sup> And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."**

Can you imagine being given such an overwhelming job to complete? Yet Noah did complete the job that God had given him and because of that, the Earth was replenished after the flood. Noah did not whine, he did not complain, he did not question...he just went about doing as God asked him to do; just as Abraham had done before him.

### **Genesis 7:5-6**

**<sup>5</sup> And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. <sup>6</sup> Noah *was* six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.**

There is no way of knowing exactly how long it took for the construction of the ark and to load all the animals and to store up food for the time that they would be inside the ark, but we do know that Noah was 500 years old when he is first mentioned in the bible and he was 600 years old when the floodwaters covered the Earth. Building the ark, gathering the animals and storing up the food for the time they would be afloat must have taken a long time. It is possible that 100 years did transpire, before the flood came.

All that time Noah kept at the job that God had given him, year after year he continued to build...to gather...to store. Noah believed God, he had faith in God and knew that the things that God had said were going to come to pass, would happen exactly as God had told him they would. It would have been very easy for Noah to have become discouraged, to lose faith and after all that time had passed, to have begun to doubt that what God had said would happen, would actually transpire.

Would any of us have the perseverance, the unwavering faith, the deep and abiding trust that Noah possessed to keep on building, gathering and preparing for an event that was still years away? Noah feared God, he respected God and he believed what God told him and did not doubt.

We have been given a task, a job, an event to prepare for that will come to pass at the appointed time. Did Noah know the precise time that the rains and the floods would come? There is no way to know for sure, but he probably did not know exactly when the flood would begin. He was to be **prepared**, to have everything **ready** for what was to come.

We are to prepare and to be ready for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. He will come again and we can have absolute faith and trust that it will come to pass, exactly as we have been told and forewarned in God's word. In Noah's time, he was the only one that was prepared and ready for what was to come. Will you be prepared...will you fear God and believe what He has said will come to pass? Many will not and we are warned about letting ourselves become lax, to doubt and to get caught up in this world and its ways that lead to death.

### **Matthew 24:36-39**

<sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven,\* but My Father only. <sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

It is not the desire of God that any should perish, or that any should lose out on the gift of eternal life freely offered to us and made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We need to believe God completely and know beyond any doubt that what He has said will come to pass, will happen exactly as He has told us. We have been forewarned! God does not want us to be taken by surprise; He wants us to be prepared and to be spared from what is coming upon this world!

## **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We have God's **promise!** Take heart...trust and believe in that promise completely! Fear God, knowing that His word is sure and true and will stand forever! Trust in God's word...completely and in absolute confidence. We fear God, by trusting in His word, believing what He has told us without doubting, or questioning. Yes, we should fear God, but not by cowering in a corner...not by trembling at the mention of His name. God does not want us to worship Him in fear; God wants us to worship Him in love.

We fear God by respecting Him, by believing what He tells us and preparing ahead of time for what He has told us will come to pass. We fear God by the way we live our lives and in our actions and how we approach life.

## **2 Timothy 1:7**

<sup>7</sup> For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

God has given us a sound mind and His spirit to lead us into all truth. If we are to make it into God's kingdom, if we are to go all the way and receive our crown, we must obey God without question; we must listen, and we must pay attention and take heed...we must fear God!

(All scriptural references cited from the New King James Edition of the Holy Bible)

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