

Thank you...Alexis Brown
Speaker for today

REPEAT

“The conclusion, when everything has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:3-14

November Birthdays

10 Daniel Brown

November Anniversaries

2 Shannon & Susan Hudson

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Fear of the Lord Defined

Psalms 34:11-14

By Dylan Stewart

If we study the Bible, there is no mistaking the repeated commands to “fear” God. For example, the wise man famously stated, “***Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all***” (Ecclesiastes 12:13b). Similarly, Peter commanded, “***Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king***” (1 Peter 2:17). But what exactly does it mean to fear the Lord?

The Proverbs and Psalms provide a great amount of information in answering what it means to fear the Lord. Consider several definitions the Bible provides:

- “***You who fear in the Lord, trust in the Lord***” (Psalm 115:11a).
- “***Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways***” (Psalm 128:1).
- “***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge***” (Proverbs 1:7a).
- “***The fear of the Lord is to hate evil***” (Proverbs 8:13a).
- “***By the fear of the Lord one departs from evil***” (Proverbs 16:6b).

In Psalm 34:11-14, the Psalmist provides a very clear picture of what it means to fear God. In fact, the Psalmist’s very intention is to teach people how to fear the Lord:

“11 Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days,

that he may see good? **13** *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.* **14** *Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*”

First, to fear God, the Psalmist says a person must keep his tongue from evil (v.13). Though the Psalms exist under the Law of Moses, which is a law that Christians are not under today (Galatians 5:1-4), the admonition to control our tongues is certainly still required under Jesus’s New Testament law. Jesus warned, **“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak”** (Matthew 12:36). Similarly, Paul taught, **“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear”** (Ephesians 4:29). The tongue is evil and poisonous (James 3:8). Therefore, the tongue must be bridled because **“what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person”** (Matthew 15:11). If we do not bridle our tongues, we do not truly fear God and our **“religion is worthless”** (James 1:26). Specifically, the Psalmist warns that we must guard against the temptation of speaking deceit (v.13), which Peter condemns in 1 Peter 3:10-11 while quoting this very Psalm. We must only allow truth to come out of our mouths (always spoken in love [Ephesians 4:15]) and avoid deception so we can escape calamity and eternal punishment (Revelation 21:8). Remember, **“One with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity”** (Proverbs 17:20).

Second, with verse 14, it is clear, just as the writer of Proverbs 16:6 taught, that a healthy fear of God includes turning away from sin. This eternal truth is perfectly exemplified in 2 Chronicles 7:14 where God explained, **“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”** Today, turning from sin (repentance) is required of every person to be saved (Luke 13:3,5; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30-31). However, the Psalmist shows that simply turning away from sin is not enough; a person must then **“do good.”** The law of Christ makes this exact same demand. For

people who have repented and obtained salvation in Christ, they have a lofty requirement they must continually meet. Paul commanded, **“As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone”** (Galatians 6:10). Disciples of Christ are expected to abound in good works (Matthew 5:16). In fact, if we are not busy doing good works, then our faith is dead and useless (James 2:14-26), but if we **“do good”** and actively desire to **“see good”** (Psalm 34:14, 12), we thus exhibit a fear of God.

Finally, to fear God involves seeking peace (v.14). The Law of Christ makes the same demand. Paul wrote, **“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”** (Romans 12:18). Christians must **“strive for peace with everyone”** (Hebrews 12:14a). We all should desire peace since Christ said, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”** (Matthew 5:9). Ultimately, true peace is only found through Christ: **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”** (John 14:27). We must let peace rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15), not anxiety (Philippians 4:6), discontentment (Jude 16), anger (Galatians 5:19-21), or division (Romans 16:17). If we actively pursue and obtain peace, then we will be **“godly and dignified in every way”** (1 Timothy 2:2b).

Conclusion

Paul told the Corinthians, **“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God”** (2 Corinthians 7:1). We are commanded throughout God’s Word to fear Him. Our holiness is completed, or perfected, by our fear of God. Having understood the Psalmist’s explanation for what it means to fear the Lord in Psalm 34:11-14, let us not be like those described as having **“no fear of God before their eyes”** (Psalm 36:1; Romans 3:18). Instead, let us all fear God, for, truly, this is the whole duty of man.
