

Good Fear
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When trouble arises, there are some that run toward it and there are some that run away from it. I have often heard this saying or something similar when referring to the heroic nature of first responders or military personnel. It is not good for everyone to run toward trouble, but we are thankful for those that do. Their efforts typically will minimize the damage and often save other people. When it comes to our faith journey, God's Word encourages us that our greatest fear ought to be God Himself.

At first it seems counter intuitive to be afraid of God, but there is a purpose when the Bible says, "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord" (Psalm 112:1).

We are physical people in a physical world, and so often our biggest fears are physical fears. We might be afraid of injury or sickness for ourselves or others. We might be afraid of material wealth or possessions being lost or stolen or inadequate. We might fear failure in a sporting or intellectual endeavor. Our physical fears seem big and important, and they are. But all these physical, material fears are only temporary when compared to our eternal self.

God's Word says our greatest fear ought to be something that can impact our eternal self, as well as our physical needs. Even with this eternal perspective our human nature tends to view the Devil and his evil ways as our greatest spiritual fear. While this fear is understandable, if we are ranking things we ought to fear, there is another spiritual being that ought to be feared even more than the Devil. Even with all his might the Devil must always bow his knee and yield to the authority of God Himself.

Romans 8 reminds us of the powerful truth that, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Psalm 27 says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall, I fear?" The truth is the Devil has no power where God is present and God has power over everything.

The fear of God and His commandments aren't a fear of God destroying us, they are fears that God could destroy us. No one goes to heaven, and no one goes to hell without God's divine judgment. The Devil has no say in this eternal judgment. The Devil's only power is to tempt people into falling in love with the material world and rejecting or ignoring our eternal realities. The Devil fools us into fearing loss in the world, when our only true fear ought to be losing our relationship with God. Psalm 112:7 says, "The one who fears the Lord is never afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting the Lord." When we fear God, our fear is correctly placed in the most powerful being in the physical and spiritual world. When we fear the Lord we realize nothing else has any power over us. When we fear the Lord we are filled with peace because we know what our God is capable of and we know what He has done for us. Our God gave up His life so we could have ours.

God's perfect love drives out our fear of punishment and pain. Our fear of the Lord Himself leaves no room for any other fear. Instead, God's perfect love fills us with peace. So let's run toward the only thing we have to fear, and in so doing be embraced by His grace and love.