
Words of Truth

Hebrews 10:31

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The context we have been studying is putting those to whom this letter was written on notice about God's wrath. We have already read in this context about *"a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation"* (Hebrews 10:27). What we are going to be considering in this article is this statement: *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Hebrews 10:31).

The fear of God is a challenging subject of study throughout the Scriptures. In both the Old and New Testaments there are clear instructions to fear God. Moses taught Israel to fear God: *"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged"* (Deuteronomy 6:1-2). A Psalmist wrote: *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him"* (Psalms 89:7). Jesus taught about fearing God: *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28). Paul taught about fearing God: *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (II Corinthians 7:1).

There are great lessons that are taught about the benefits of fearing God. For example, fear helps in learning and obedience. Notice: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction... Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil... Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Psalms 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, and Philippians 2:12).

All of those Scriptures cited above are clear and show us that we are to fear God. We can see even in the brief sample of Scriptures I have provided thus far, the benefit of fearing

God. Having said all of that, there is a reason that I wrote about this being a challenging subject matter. Notice: *“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love”* (I John 4:14-18).

When you study this subject matter out entirely, you are left to conclude that our relationship with God should not be one of constant fear, but rather of love (Mark 12:29-30 and I Corinthians 8:3). The kind of love that obeys Him (I John 5:1-3) and thus we are confident in our salvation rather than fearful of destruction (I John 5:13). If you will recall, we learned earlier in this epistle that Jesus came and provided a means whereby they and we can escape the fear of physical death that existed under the Law of Moses (Hebrews 2:9-18).

In the first century, when the Holy Spirit was given to those whom obeyed the Gospel (Acts 8:12-24, Acts 19:1-7, and Ephesians 1:13-14); that is what the Spirit confirmed to those saints (Romans 8:15-17). Proper fear exists when we consider what would happen if we disobeyed Him (Hebrews 12:28-29). Proper fear is the kind of fear a child should have of his or her parents if he or she were to disobey their rules (Leviticus 19:3). If we were to only fear the Lord, and fear Him in all ways, terror would take hold of us (Psalms 119:120). God does not desire us to walk about every moment of our lives fearing the return of Christ and the Judgment Day (John 14:1-3, II Peter 3:10-14, Jude 1:21, and I John 3:1-3). The Lord wants us to be of good comfort (II Corinthians 13:11). So, where is the balance? How do I fear and remain joyful?

In a Psalm we read: *“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling”* (Psalms 2:11). Fear is intended to keep us obedient (Exodus 20:18-20 and Jeremiah 32:36-40). If you know you’re going to be saved (I John 2:28), through your obedient love (John 14:15); you’ll fear consequences of sin. Yet, you’ll not be afraid of the Lord. What you should be afraid of is disappointing Him, by violating His will (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Therefore, fear brings joy because fear moves you to obey the Lord and continually serve Him. Such obedience brings happiness and joy to your life (Psalms 35:9, Proverbs 29:18, Isaiah 61:10, and I Peter 1:3-9).

Keep in mind, the context in which Hebrews 10:31 is written is about willful disobedience (Hebrews 10:25-30). If you are faithful, there is nothing to fear about your current spiritual state. The only fear you should have is concerning what would occur if you were to choose to be disobedient to the will of God. Remember always, God does not intend for His people to be miserably afraid. Remember this: *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee”* (Isaiah 26:3; cf. Colossians 3:15).