

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

LIVING IN REVERENT AWE OF OUR HOLY GOD

The Key:

- TO ENTERING HIS PRESENCE - ISA. 33:6
- TO GAIN HIS CONFIDENCE - PSA. 25:14

Access:

- TO WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE - PROV. 1:7
- TO PROTECTION FROM EVIL - EXO. 20:20
- TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY - MAL. 3:16
- SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY - EXO. 18:21



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Zehr

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Living in Reverent Awe of our Holy God

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IN CONCLUSION:

After living for more than eighty-five years, seventy-five as a believer, teaching, preaching, and writing, I have concluded that:

THE FEAR OF GOD BECOMES THE FOUNDATION FOR A LIFE OF LOVE AND PEACE AND A CLOSE, LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR AWESOME HEAVENLY FATHER.

I CONCUR WITH KING SOLOMON:

“Now that all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13)

Pastor Robert Birch’s life motto:

May the **FEAR OF THE LORD** be our standard.
The **HEART OF GOD** be our pursuit,
And
May we **SEEK HIM** with single hearted devotion.

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PREFACE

To avoid misinterpreting the topic, “The Fear of the Lord”, consider the following:

The fear of the Lord is to appreciate His Holy presence and to live before God in love, awe, and honour. Whereas, to be afraid of God is to regard Him only as a judge. When we live in the fear of the Lord and acknowledge His holiness and invite His “eyes to be upon us” at all times, He showers us with His love and grants us countless benefits!

When we pray, according to what we refer to as “The Lord’s Prayer”, we begin with “Hallowed be your name”. Here, we acknowledge our Heavenly Father as Holy, approaching Him in awe and reverence. This is a central aspect of the fear of the Lord. We will see that He grants the sense of His Presence in response to our prayer relative to whether we actually hallow His name.

“From the beginning, Proverbs 1:17 makes it clear that we gain “the essence of wisdom” and cross “the threshold of knowledge” only when we fear the Lord, as the Passion Translation translates it, we live “in complete awe and adoration of God” (Introduction to Proverbs. TPT).

INTRODUCTION

In this booklet, I aim to address a very important aspect of the Christian life. Missing this factor might be the reason why many believers become subject to idle talk, moral failure, and involvement in questionable conduct, all while having minimal awareness of their sins. To navigate the challenges of our fallen culture and temptations, it is absolutely necessary to be aware of the need for this aspect of our daily Christian walk. To prepare ourselves for the trials and pressures of this end-time confusion, it requires **THE FEAR OF THE LORD!** Or, as I like to call it: **LIVING IN REVERENT AWE OF OUR HOLY GOD.**

The fear of the Lord can be a confusing topic. As we generally understand the word fear, it seems incongruent to a loving God. Let's ask the Lord for a deep personal revelation in this matter. It is not a matter of being afraid or living in fear, but of holding an attitude of awe, honour, complete trust, and a passionate desire to please the Lord.

One of the definitions of the Greek word for fear, *phobeo*, is "to reverence, venerate, and to treat with great respect". The word fear in this case is actually an invitation to a deep, transparent, yet personal relationship with a high and honourable Almighty God. It is a critical prerequisite to living and walking in a loving, harmonious, and productive relationship with the Lord. In this case, the word fear does not mean being afraid!

Even in Deuteronomy, it was made clear that for the protection and blessing of God's people, they must "revere this glorious and awesome name of the Lord your God" (Deut. 28:58). Throughout the entire Old Testament, we see a direct connection between the blessing of, or the curse on the people of Israel, dependent on whether they walked in the fear of the Lord.

Although there is a sense that the Lord is our friend and brother, and we can walk together in love, it is important to know that He is God, and we are not. Just as a child and their parent can walk together in love, the child needs to walk in "fear of" the parent for protection from external sources, as well as from its own temptations.

BENEFITS OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD

To better grasp this concept, let's draw a comparison between our relationship with the Lord and that of an employer and employee. For a harmonious and productive employer-employee relationship, two aspects must be clear. First, the employee should understand the expectations set by the employer, recognizing that these expectations translate into the employee's duties. Second, the employee has a right to be informed about the benefits or rewards corresponding to the extent to which they fulfill those expectations.

Recognizing that our primary responsibility is to "fear the Lord", we can then consider the value and benefits available to us if we meet the employer's expectations. The extent of these benefits naturally aligns with the degree to which we truly adhere to the expectations.

There has never been a plan or a relationship that has offered so many all-inclusive benefits as those promised when we "fear the Lord". Take a moment to reflect on and absorb these incredible benefits. If these benefits are not forthcoming in our lives, it's an opportune time to consider the degree to which we are walking and living in the fear of the Lord!

BENEFITS:

Prolongs Days

All mankind is seeking ways to extend life and here is an available formula: "The fear of the Lord adds length to life..." (Prov. 10:27)

Security for Family

"He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death" (Prov.14:26-27).

Protects Us From Evil

"Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil" (Prov. 16:6).

This is a very key aspect that is often neglected and has led to the downfall of many. We will delve into this topic in more detail later.

Access to Wisdom

We all desire wisdom and knowledge, and we know that wisdom is the key theme in the book of Proverbs. But, it is important to note that there is a prerequisite to wisdom. In other words, you cannot access wisdom directly, it begins with "the fear of the Lord."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." (Prov. 1:7)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (Prov. 9:10)

Saves From Lack

“Fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing” (Psa. 34:9).

Directs Our Path and Assures Our Prosperity!

“Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord?

He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.

He will spend his days in prosperity,
and his descendants will inherit the land” (Psa. 25:12-13).

Grants Access to God’s Confidence

“The Lord confides in those who fear Him;

He makes his covenant known to them” (Psa. 25:14).

A Key to the Lord’s Treasure:

A Rich Store of Salvation, Wisdom, & Knowledge

“He will be the sure foundation for your times...the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure” (Isa. 33:6).

Here is a most amazing revelation! There is a treasure box accessible to every believer. It contains a sure foundation, wisdom, and knowledge. Who would not long for these treasures? However, one needs to approach it with the proper key—the fear of the Lord.

The Key of the Final Faithful

Malachi is viewed as the book calling for end-time restoration. We have seen a wonderful, renewed emphasis of the restoration of relationships between father and son (Mal. 4:6). It is equally critical that we respond to the need to see the restoration of the fear of the Lord. While the restoration of generational relationships will repel a curse, the fear of the Lord here will bring pleasure to the Lord and blessing to those who respond.

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and mediate on His name” (Mal. 3:16).

“But to you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings...” (Mal. 4:2).

ITS PRACTICE

Here we will see examples where the fear of the Lord was practiced and the benefits that were gained.

It Assures Blessing on the Family

What motivated the midwives of Egypt to risk their lives to spare the Hebrew boys, and what benefits did they gain?

“And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families of their own” (Exo. 1:21).

It Empowered Joseph to Overcome Temptation and Offense

How did Joseph remain steadfast throughout torture, slavery, imprisonment, and moral temptation during his journey?

When it came to the need to interpret dreams, Joseph always acknowledged that the interpretation did not come from himself, but it came from God (Gen. 40:8; 41:16).

When Potiphar’s wife was attempting to seduce him, he said that he could not “sin against God” (Gen. 39:9).

When his brothers were fearful and not sure if they could trust Joseph, he revealed the factor that had been his source of blessing. “On the third day, Joseph said to them, ‘Do this and you will live, for I fear God’” (Gen 42:18).

It Was Required to Serve in Judging God’s People

The aspects that corrupt judges are prejudice and partiality; only the fear of God could override these natural tendencies.

To qualify to judge God’s people, Moses’ father-in-law advised Moses to select: “But select capable men from the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy and hate dishonest gain” (Exo. 18:21).

It Kept the Israelites From Sinning

“Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid, God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning’ (Exo. 20:20).

It Was Nehemiah’s Motivation

In order to appeal to the people to rise up and have the courage and perseverance to rebuild the wall, Nehemiah invoked the fear of the Lord. Then I said, ‘What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of God’ (Neh. 5:9).

“But I did not do so because of the fear of God” (Neh. 5:15).

It Generated a Climate for Signs and Wonders

In Acts 5, after the death of Ananias and Saphira, the fear of the Lord “seized the whole church, and all who heard about these events. The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people” (Acts 5:11-12). *More on this later!*

It Motivated and Prepared Cornelius to Receive Peter

When the Lord needed a man to play a key role in opening the door of the gospel to the Gentiles, He chose a man who feared God.

“He is a righteous and God-fearing man...” (Acts 10: 22).

It Is a Key Factor for End-Time Believers

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke often to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. So, a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and meditate on His name” (Mal. 3:16).

ITS LOSS

After reviewing some practices related to observing the fear of the Lord, we will consider examples where its absence led to significant losses. Israel, as a whole, neglected the fear of the Lord and consequently suffered great turmoil and loss, as foretold in Deuteronomy 28. Due to disobedience and absence of the fear of the Lord, they forfeited all the promised benefits.

The loss of the benefits promised earlier can be traced back to the loss of the fear of the Lord. In the following section, we will consider some specific examples to illustrate this point.

Losing the Kingship

Saul, a most naturally admirable man, was granted a position among God’s people. He earned the respect of the people and achieved victory over his enemies. However, he lost his kingship after not obeying God’s commands through the prophet Samuel. The ultimate reason for his loss of the fear of the Lord lay in his fear of the people.

“I was afraid of the people so I gave in to them” (1 Sam. 15:24).

Solomon

There are cases of great and powerful servants of the Lord who lost their way simply by disregarding or neglecting the fear of the Lord. One example is King Solomon. Despite being endowed with great wisdom, riches, power, and renowned in influence, he drifted from the fear of the Lord, leading to the loss of God’s presence and the generational blessing. (See: 1 Kings 10:23-11:13)

“The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel who had appeared to him twice” (1 Kings 11: 9).

Although his later writing of Ecclesiastics contains some wisdom, it is largely filled with negativity, pessimism, meaninglessness, and hopelessness. Solomon discovered that merely possessing knowledge, wealth, and everything under the sun proved to be vanity and emptiness. Meanwhile, his family life ended in confusion, marked by rebellion and a divided kingdom. It became clear that when he lost the fear of the Lord, he lost the associated benefits.

However, after all this, Solomon arrived at an amazing conclusion in Ecclesiastics when he gave his final word: “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing whether it is good or evil” (Ecc. 12:13).

Loving Jesus is Not Enough

During the 1980s, one of the most prominent and outwardly successful evangelists fell into sin and illegal activity. He had built a Christian resort that attracted thousands from around the world. However, he was compromising and leading a double life.

While in prison, he acknowledged his sin and repented. When asked, “When did you stop loving Jesus?” he replied, “I never stopped loving Jesus, I just lost the fear of the Lord. This lack of the fear of the Lord allowed me to excuse my behavior and compromise my standards.”

This, no doubt, explains the fall of many prominent and successful leaders. The fear of the Lord is our protection. If we lose that, we can easily excuse our careless behaviour and carnal desires. The enemy of our souls is always ready to help us justify our compromises with evil and encourage us to ignore the pleas of our consciences.

No Fear, No Presence

John Bevere recounts a time when he was asked to speak at a large conference in another nation. Despite the powerful worship team and a large crowd in attendance, he sensed an absence of the Lord’s presence. Even during the scripture reading, he observed a total lack of focus or concentration from the congregation. Many were whispering, some laughing, some drinking coffee, and others still walking in the aisles.

John inquired of the Lord as to why he could not sense the Lord’s presence. The Lord revealed that there was no fear of the Lord in the house. The Lord’s heart was grieved, and He asked John to address the matter.

When John stood up to speak, he did not utter a word for about a full minute. After he had everyone’s attention, he began to speak, “I sense that there is very little respect for the Lord in this house. Yet, you expect the Lord to be present. If the President or even a football star was here, they would receive more attention and honour than the Lord has been given.”

After half an hour of John’s message, folks began to repent, some even on their knees. Within a short time, a mighty revival broke out in that place. When the fear of the Lord is present, His Presence feels welcome!

No Fear, No Conscience

In the book of Acts, even when the presence of the Lord was strong, a lack of the fear of the Lord brought devastating results. In Acts 5, we read of a couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who knew the apostles and witnessed miracles, signs, and wonders. It is mentioned that great grace was upon them all, indicating that they must have experienced that grace. However, these two obviously had no appreciation of the fear of the Lord. Sadly, their lack of the fear of the Lord cost them everything. If they had considered the matter of the fear of the Lord, their conscience would have protected them from their deceptive plan.

Their natural desire for recognition, along with the assumption that they would never be found out, would not have found ground in their hearts if they had been living in the fear of God. The fear of God brings hidden motives and fears to the surface. These can either be acknowledged and repented of or be covered up and excused. Upon acknowledgement and repentance, His Presence advances; when excused, His Presence recedes. Clearly, the rest of the believers recognized what had been lacking because we are told, “Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events” (Acts 5:11).

THE POWER OF FEAR

There is a sense in which fear becomes a major controlling factor of our behavior, both positively and negatively. We all may be living in response to some form of fear. It may be in response to fear of failure, fear of loss, fear of the future, or fear of man.

FoMO

A new acronym, FoMO (Fear of Missing Out), has recently appeared, afflicting many of the younger generation. They feel the constant need to be near their devices, quickly checking every message. There’s a desperate urge to be aware of any possible action or event that might affect their social standing. The shame of being unaware or the fear of not being in the center of action controls their lives. Unfortunately, this affliction

seems quite contagious and has also been plaguing the older generations. What if we were to develop a new level of FoML (Fear of Missing updates from the Lord)?

Many people live much of their lives in the “fear of man”. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they act or react based on what others might think or how they might be perceived. In making decisions, whether consciously or unconsciously, they consistently consider how they might please or impress others. Unknowingly, they surrender their will to meet the favour and approval of others. This is the impact fear has on many. In a real sense, whoever or whatever we fear will greatly influence our decisions and actions. Questions such as, “What will they think?”, perhaps summarize the driving force behind many people’s actions. What if the overriding thought in our hearts were, “What will He think?” We choose the fear of the Lord!

Fear as a Protection

While fear can influence our decisions, it can also serve as a guardian for our protection. Do you fear a police officer, or are you afraid of one? If you are not in any violation, there is no need to be afraid. However, you may have a sense of honourable fear due to their position of authority and capacity to bring judgment. You may feel free to greet them or engage in conversation. You may even have a sense of security and protection while they are near. If you are consciously acting illegally, your reaction will shift from simple fear to “being afraid”. Being afraid implies that there is something to hide.

If I am speeding and see the police, I will immediately slow down. Why? In this case, the fear of the police activates my conscience and serves to protect me from myself. Generally, we assume that the police are there to protect us from outward danger. But, there is also a sense in which they are there to protect us from ourselves—our self-indulgence or unsafe behavior. Similarly, the fear of the Lord, which includes an awareness of His immediate presence, becomes a dimension of protection for me from my carnal self and the tendency to compromise righteousness. Losing this protective relationship has allowed even great spiritual leaders to gradually compromise until they become defiled and lose their spiritual calling.

Free From Other Fears

If we live and walk before the Lord in love and honour, our fear of the Lord actually invites us and makes us feel safe to be close to Him. We begin to perceive His awesomeness as an expression of His love and protection. When we consciously surrender our will to please and gain the favour and approval of our Lord and Heavenly Father, His great love and awesome power become so real that we are freed from the need to please others. “Do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

We will share later that when the Holy Spirit came upon us in the 1970s and the fear of the Lord was prevailing, we found it easy to respond in radical obedience. Somehow, other fears that always undermine faith no longer had any grip on us.

Fear of the Lord as an Antidote

An antidote is a medicine or remedy that counteracts the effects of poison or disease. Our natural man is easily afflicted with countless natural diseases such as lust, pride, jealousy, self-indulgence, greed, and many more. The thrilling fact is that the fear of the Lord can be an antidote, as none of these can survive in God’s presence. When they are exposed to His presence, we can either cover them and retreat or acknowledge them and let Him cancel them, exchanging them with more of Himself.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Our Attitude in Worship

As we shared earlier from the example of John Bevere, our level of “fear of the Lord” has much to do with the measure of His presence. If our respect for the Lord’s presence in worship is less than it would be for a human dignitary, there is a definite lack. When we arrive late, chat with others during the worship, spectate, analyze, and criticize, the fear of the Lord is obviously not in our attitude.

True worship in the fear of the Lord calls for our total focus to worship, honour, and pour out our love exclusively on Him. The practice

at our home church is that our meeting begins with worship. This comes before introductions, before welcoming visitors, or the announcements. The thought is that our most notable and primary guest is the Lord Himself, and we focus on and welcome Him first. Since this is our stated intention, much is lost if we arrive late, chat with others, and take this time lightly. We assume that the first part of our meeting is for Him and about Him; the later part is for us.

In Hebrews, we have instruction on how to worship our God. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28).

Order in God’s House

Leadership and spiritual order in the church can often be taken too lightly. Although we are no longer living in Old Testament times, for us to experience the benefits of His blessing and presence, the Lord still expects us to respect the order in His family. We see in Numbers 16 that when Korah and other leaders rebelled against Moses, the God-ordained leader, they lost not only their positions but also their lives.

At the same time, leaders who are called to lead should represent the Lord in “the fear of the Lord.” In Numbers 20, we see how Moses suffered loss when he struck the rock instead of speaking to it according to God’s instructions: “But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring the community into the land I give them’” (Num. 20:12).

How He Responds

It becomes clear that the way and the attitude with which we approach the Lord will often activate a comparable response from the Lord. “Come near to God and He will come near to you” (Jam. 4:8).

If we worship Him with love, honour, and full devotion, His Presence will be the response. If we approach worship half-heartedly and with little spiritual discipline, He will reciprocate in like manner; He will respond in kind! This explains why even in the same meeting, one person

may be overwhelmed with God’s presence, while another may have no such awareness.

In Psalm 18:25, the TPT reads, “Lord it is clear to me now that how we live will dictate how you deal with us.”

“To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty” (Psa. 28:25-27 NIV).

AWE RELATIVE TO THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY

We all would like to experience a greater sense of His presence. However, this requires moving much closer to Him as the Light, and this Light exposes all presumptions and hidden sins.

Consider the Acts account of Ananias and Sapphira. Why can so many today get away with looseness, whereas they were severely judged right on the spot? The presence, the glory, and the light were bright, and the Lord was very close. Lacking the fear of the Lord, they presumed that they could hide the real facts and step into the Holy Presence of God. When we lose the fear of the Lord and our hearts and intentions become loose and polluted, then it is best that the Lord, as a “consuming fire”, remains at a distance.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Earlier, we observed individuals who experienced loss when they deviated from walking in the fear of the Lord. Here, we want to emphasize that the fear of the Lord was a consistent factor in the lives of those whom God used powerfully, both in Biblical times and since.

The Patriarchs

We can look at Enoch, Noah, and Abraham and see that, beyond all others, they believed and walked in the fear of the Lord. Abraham offered Isaac in the fear of the Lord. As we noted earlier, Joseph ascribed his faithfulness to having a fear of God.

Even at the initiation of God's call to Moses, we note: "At this Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God" (Exo. 2:11). Many times, Moses acknowledged and urged the people to fear the Lord (See: Exo. 20:20).

Elijah and Elisha

These two were among those who appeared to walk most fully in the favour and miraculous demonstration of the power of the Lord. From his initial call in 1 Kings 17:1, Elijah, whose name means "my God is Jehovah", walked and moved in the fear of the Lord. He believed and responded to the Lord's instructions despite opposition or natural impossibilities.

After Elijah called Elisha, Elisha immediately left his family, slaughtered his oxen, and burned his plough. No doubt the fear of the God of Elijah came upon him, making his family and security secondary to his complete allegiance to the Lord. Meanwhile, the Lord honoured his commitment by granting him miraculous experiences beyond even those of his father Elijah.

David and Solomon

King David truly walked in the fear of the Lord. The book of Psalms begins and ends with the fear of the Lord: "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling" (Psa. 2:11). "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy" (Psa. 147:11).

Even though David transgressed terribly, his appreciation of the fear of the Lord found ground in him to repent, and his two Psalms of confession, Psalm 32 and 51, stand as a beacon of hope for many. Certainly, the Lord honoured David, not because of his perfection but because of his heart's desire to walk in the ways of the Lord, and he was granted the benefits promised to those who fear Him.

Isaiah

No doubt, the story of Isaiah 6 stands as the ultimate example of being overwhelmed by the fear of the Lord when being confronted by His very Presence. Here, we also see the inevitable response when genuinely

confronted with Him: "Woe to me!" I cried. "For I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among of a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Almighty" (Isa. 6:5). While this encounter exposed Isaiah, his response nevertheless qualified him to become one of the Lord's greatest representatives.

PERSONAL EXAMPLES

Caught up in the Fear of God

In the early 1970s, there appeared to be a season when the fear of the Lord was exceptionally strong, and the Holy Spirit was highly activated. It lifted us into another realm where natural concerns and the fear of man diminished greatly. Overwhelmed by the fear of the Lord, nothing else mattered. We placed a large poster on our wall, quoting Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."

When we sensed the Spirit's call, we left our job and our rural community. Along with our four small children, we moved to downtown Toronto to join a small group and radically trusted the Lord for every aspect of the future. While we didn't use the term "the fear of the Lord" at that time, looking back, we now realize that it was very real in those days. The fear of the Lord was so prevailing that "what if" had little impact on our decisions.

Giving Our All

In 1971, the Holy Spirit visited us, and His light and presence overshadowed us. Those were the days of the Jesus people. I became highly sensitive to His bright light. During a meeting, as we began to sing a song we had sung many times, I suddenly choked when we reached the line, "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold". It dawned on me how often I had sung such serious words without being conscious of the holiness of the Lord's presence.

Having recently left our pastoral position, we were meeting with a small "sold-out" fellowship. I found no rest until we acted on what we

had declared in the Lord's presence. Despite having no job and four young children, we collected all our finances and offered them to the church elders. They were quite surprised but responded, "We accept it on behalf of the church. We assume it is now the Lord's money, and we now give it back to you for you to be able to care for your family."

While our action may seem radical, it accomplished several aspects in our life journey. We became much more aware of how lightly and glibly we often make spiritual comments with little reality. This action also broke the spirit of fear that we might not have enough and released a spirit of generosity, allowing us a life full of plenty and generosity. Any act of total obedience can be a fragrance before the Lord and deepens the sense of His presence, releasing us from other fears.

My editor, Rachel, noted that after Abraham responded to God's request to offer Isaac because he feared the Lord, God provided a lamb. Additionally, Abraham was able to name the place Jehovah-jirah, which could be translated as "the Lord sees" or "the Lord provides". The implication is that when we respond in awe and honour to the Lord, He will reciprocate with His blessing and provision.

Great Grace Was Upon us

There was a season during which the fear of the Lord seemed to prevail. The Lord was highly honoured and, in turn, He honoured the principles of His word. Those who honoured the God-appointed leaders, leading with humility, were blessed and experienced spiritual growth. Meanwhile, the leaders prioritized the well-being of the body over self-interest and were open to counsel from their peers. Even the young people eagerly attended meetings, running to secure seats near the front. Experiential testimonies were rich and abundant, with meetings held three or four times a week.

Everyone actively participated in worship, and at the end of each meeting, those unable to attend were anxious to discover what they had missed. Once a week, a meal was prepared, and anyone on the street was welcome to join. Individuals who came off the street were convicted,

converted, and placed in homes. A construction company was formed to provide converted young men with personal work experience. Additionally, a house of refuge was available to single young women.

Some visitors from out of town, after attending the meetings, decided to move to the city to become part of this spiritual family. They were housed with local families until they could find their own housing. At one point, our home provided for a family with five children and three single women. These actions and activities were not pre-planned or designed but simply seemed to unfold as we basked in His presence. Some of the young people eventually became leaders and initiated similar works in other cities.

The Presence is Fragile

The reader might well ask: "Where is it now, how long did it last, and what caused it to dissipate?" (Please note, the following are simply my personal observations. I do have an entire book written on this matter.)

The Holy Spirit has been likened to a dove in that it is extremely sensitive to the environment. It will land only where it is welcome and given pre-eminence, but quietly leaves when it is grieved.

The depth and clear beauty of that season may have lasted about three to five years, and it dissipated so gradually that most didn't notice its receding. Those who noticed and spoke up were considered troublesome. Others who noticed the lack joined forces to work harder to maintain what was once spontaneous. Eventually, the maintenance of the performance became all-consuming. Those who gave themselves to keep the momentum were considered to be the more faithful, commended, and given recognition and positions.

Perhaps the subtlest pitfall is pride. When you have something exceptional happening, it is so easy to compare with others. Pride soon gives way to judging others. Gradually, comments like "poor Christianity" crept in. Testimonies of how much superior we were than other places were applauded, and, of course, resulted in alienating members from their parents and former associates. We didn't realize that gradually

we became like those we were judging. Because of our superior attitude, any external criticism was seen as jealousy, so we had no ears to hear any caution or corrective words. Thus, our presumption became our isolation. A living Spirit-led organism gradually became a defensive organization.

Living in presumption may be the opposite of walking in the fear of the Lord. Presumption assumes a certain sense of superiority and self-sufficiency. Its basic characteristic is pride. In contrast, humility lives in an attitude of “there must be more” and is always open to correction and new revelation.

Earlier, the power of His presence and the fear of the Lord had activated everyone’s conscience that little discipline was needed. As this receded, the leaders unwittingly felt a need to exercise control to maintain the high standard. This caused members to behave for approval rather than being allowed to grow in their response to the Spirit in them. Gradually, the key leaders became the unquestioned authority. Eventually, one leader became the “chosen one” and local autonomy was lost.

If the Lord would again grace us with such presence, we pray that we might know to “keep our hands off the ark” (1 Chron. 13).

Where From and Where To

Much of what we experienced in those days seemed to be His response to our hunger and cry: “There must be more!” We sense that this cry is beginning to stir in many hearts.

Although we may have experienced a measure and caught glimpses of walking in this dimension, I yearn for and believe there is much more. It is the Lord’s mercy that He has granted us much concession and forbearance in this area. If He held us to the New Testament standard, who among us could still be standing?

There are many theories, and even more excuses, for why today we see very few genuine miracles—much less than was promised by the Lord or seen in the books of Acts. So, is it that miracles are not for our time, that we lack faith, or that there is a deficiency in spiritual authority?

While these may be minor factors, how about considering the atmosphere of the church in Acts 5 compared to now.

Acts 5 Church

Let’s consider the spiritual atmosphere of the Acts 5 church and notice the commensurate impact it had relative to signs and wonders.

“When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard about these events” (Acts 5:5).

“Great fear seized the whole church and upon all who heard these events. The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought their sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed” (Acts 5:11-16).

There are many prophetic declarations concerning a coming harvest. How might we prepare for such a harvest? The greatest harvest ever known actually occurred in Acts 5, and it came in response to the fear of the Lord. Perhaps, here is the formula for the harvest we are anticipating. If we find the appropriate place for “the fear of the Lord”, maybe now, even as then, miraculous signs and wonders would follow. AMEN! Do it again, Lord!

Draw Near With Fear, but Don’t Be Afraid

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). “Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:19-22).

THE FEAR OF GOD

I want to know my Father God, and sense His presence near,
To honour Him as Holy God, yet approach with godly fear.
I want to hear His calming voice and in His love abide,
Since He can meet my every need, I lay my self aside.

Too long I've gone my way and asked the Lord to bless,
Lacking the fear of my Holy God, I now with tears confess.
While all the benefits of His grace, I tried so hard to gain,
Now, all of these are freely mine when I in Him remain.

Take now my pride and selfishness, I count it all a loss,
I lay it all down at your feet and gladly bear my cross.
Now, I admire your holiness while I confess my shame,
Abiding in the fear of God, the benefits I now can claim.

Lord, keep my conscience clear, convict me day and night,
I can no longer trust myself; I can only trust Your light.
Every day and hour, I want to live under Your loving gaze,
May awesome fear of Holy God guide my remaining days.

– A. Zehr 2024

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THE FEAR OF THE LORD

LIVING IN REVERENT AWE OF OUR HOLY GOD

JUST FINISHED READING THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

SUCH A NEEDY WORD FOR THIS DAY.

SUMMED UP VERY WELL IN THE POEM AT THE END.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LABOUR OF LOVE!

I FEEL THAT THIS IS **A TIMELY MESSAGE.**

THIS IS WONDERFUL, ALBERT.

MAY THE LORD **USE THIS FOR REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH.**

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SOME HEART TO HONOUR THE LORD,

THIS WILL RESONATE AS HOPE.

IN THESE LAST DAYS, WE, THE LORD'S PEOPLE, NEED THIS WORD.

IT OPENS UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD.

* * * * *

"THEN THOSE WHO FEARED THE LORD TALKED WITH EACH OTHER, AND THE LORD LISTENED AND HEARD. A SCROLL OF REMEMBRANCE WAS WRITTEN IN HIS PRESENCE CONCERNING THOSE WHO FEARED THE LORD AND HONORED HIS NAME. THEY WILL BE MINE, SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY, IN THE DAY THAT I MAKE UP MY TREASURED POSSESSION. I WILL SPARE THEM..." MAL.3: 16-17