

LESSON 47 - FEAR GOD ALONE

Who/What Do You Fear? Why You Should Fear God Alone

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What are your fears? Do you fear *people*-their persecution or the loss of their acceptance and praise? How about *natural* things like death, disease, poverty, famine, natural disasters, or climate change? Perhaps you fear *supernatural* things: Satan, demons, curses, witchcraft, aliens, or the Antichrist? Maybe you fear the *future*: failure of success, expanding government control, or the deterioration of things you value spiritually, politically, or economically within your family, party, church, or country? This lesson covers: 1) Don't fear people, 2) Don't fear things, 3) Fear God alone.

1. Don't Fear People. The Bible tells how many people live fearfully of others. John 7:12-13 says, "*Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him [Jesus]. Some said, 'He is a good man.' Others replied, 'No, he deceives the people.' But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.*" The fear was true for both the general population and some leaders. John 12:42 says, "*Many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue.*" People feared being rejected and excluded from social gatherings in their community. After Jesus's crucifixion His body was buried by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They were two members of the Jewish Council who had been secret disciples of Jesus because they feared what others would think (John 19:38-42). After Jesus' resurrection He appeared to His disciples, who until seeing Him, were hiding out of fear of the Jewish leadership. John 20:19 says, "*The first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'*" It's *natural* to fear, however, God calls us to live a *supernatural* life! Forty days after His resurrection, in Acts 1:6-8, Jesus' disciples asked Him, "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" He said to them, "*It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" Jesus hasn't called us to live in fear of man nor to be idle until He restores the kingdom. He's given the Holy Spirit to us to enable and empower us to be bold witnesses of Him to the rest of the world! 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*" God is telling each of us now what He did to Joshua in Joshua 1:9, "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

2. Don't Fear Things. Do you worry about the future? Read Matthew 6:25-34. Jesus says in verse 27, "*Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*" Never forget that God is

sovereign and in control! Do you fear death? Put your trust in the Lord and pray as King David did in Psalm 23:4, *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”* 1 Corinthians chapter 15 describes how Jesus has already conquered death so you don’t need to fear it. There it’s written, “Death is swallowed up in victory!” Romans 8 also reminds us of the bigger picture. The sufferings that we go through right now are nothing in comparison to the future glory to be received in the life to come by all who belong to Jesus. Romans 8:35-39 says, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Remember—every obstacle, trial, difficulty, illness, suffering, or challenge you endure can and should be used for the glory of God. They are not things to avoid, fear, or be anxious about. They are opportunities to build your relationship with God. Let Him guide and transform you into Jesus’ likeness through them. Let them become part of your eternal testimony for God’s glory! 2 Corinthians 5:7-9 says, *“We walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body [deceased] and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”* Death isn’t the end of your life, it’s your transition from here on earth, to Heaven with Jesus. Take heart!

3. Fear God Alone. Proverbs 29:25 says, *“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.”* Luke 12:4-5 Jesus said, *“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!”* We need to be eternally minded. Fear God, the only good One, the creator of all that is good, and the judge of those who will inherit the eternal life to come. Seek to do what pleases Him, rather than fearing the things of this world that are passing away. The fear of God is not the dread of violence, abuse, or harshness. Rather, it is the healthy reverence of loving obedience towards a good Father who knows and wants what is best for us. This is why Proverbs 9:10 says, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”* Personal humility and reverence for God is the beginning of our right direction. Romans 8:14-16 says how we’re not given a spirit of slavery, so that we fall back into fear of God and punishment. We are given a spirit of adoption through Jesus to now live as holy children of God who are loved and accepted. 1 Peter 1:17-21 says, *“If you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile... you were ransomed... with the precious blood of Christ... so that your faith and hope are in God.”* Revelation 21:4 promises that one day God, *“will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”* 2 Corinthians 7:1 encourages, *“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.”*

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father, give me wisdom, courage, and strength, and not fear the people and things of this world. They’re passing but You’re eternal. Help me fear You alone. In Jesus’ name. Amen.