

The Fear of God

The Lord wants to talk to you through these lessons. He is talking to you. Can you hear? Open your ears and listen. Open your eyes. Listen. He loves you. You are so special to Him. He wants to have an intimate relationship with you. He wants you to say, "I know the Lord like this. The Lord talked to me and told me this. This happened." He wants that kind of a relationship with you. Today I am talking about something that you might not ever have heard a sermon on; how to get the fear of the Lord. Do you have the fear of the Lord? Some people either see God as a sugar daddy. "I want this. I want this. Do this. Do this. Do this." Or they see God as a mean tyrant. "You are bad and you are going to hell. You are a sinner. You are bad and you know you are doing wrong." Neither one is how God is. Neither one. They are both wrong. Well, how is he? He is fair. He is just. He is honest. He has wisdom. If you read in James 3, it tells you what the wisdom of God is like. It is peaceful. It is gentle. It is easy to be reasoned with. It is wise. This is the God that you are thinking about.

Do you really want to serve Him with all your heart? It may be the God that you say, "I have served Him all of my life. I have served Him 60 years. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows." It's true, but at the same time God says I am a Holy God. Take off your shoes. He said that to Moses. Moses had run from God. He had murdered somebody. He had run out into the desert. He was out there 40 years, just doing sheep herding. He thought, "My life is over. I thought I had a big call in my life but I messed up so badly that there is no way God can do what I have had in my heart so I guess I am just meant to be a sheep herder." Some of you are thinking that and it is not true. When God was ready to touch Moses and touch his life, he appeared in a burning bush. Moses went over there and said, "Look at that bush. What is wrong with that bush? Is that thing on fire?" He was getting closer and getting closer. He heard, "Take off your shoes. You are on holy ground." What would that do to you if you heard that? It would change some things would it not? The atmosphere would change. The very air would change. You would think, "What is this? What is it?" Later, when Moses was taking the children of Israel out, they had sinned. They had sinned so willfully. He thought, "You do not know the Living God. You do not know." He wanted the people to know God and God wanted them to know and understand a particular aspect of His character.

The primary attribute of God is holiness. Do not ever forget that He is called the Holy Spirit. Life is holy in heaven. There cannot be any sin in heaven. You cannot get into heaven on your own. I do not care how good you say you are. I do not care how many good deeds you tell me you have done. It is not enough. If you have any sin in you, and you do, then God is holy and heaven is holy and he cannot accept you. It can only happen through Jesus and His blood and His death on the cross for you. God said, "I am going to give them these commandments. I am going to tell them that this is what I want you to do to serve Me. He named just ten things. Just do these ten things and life will be great between you and Me. What if I came to you and I said, "I want to be friends with you and I want to teach you what I know." You said, "Great, tell me what I have to do." I said, "There are only ten things. If you can do these ten things we will do great." You say, "Okay, tell me what they are." I start naming them and you cannot keep them. That is what happened to these people.

This is one of the ways you get the fear of God in you. It is when you see God in His majesty, in His power, in His ability to do things with the elements. He can you know. Listen to this. "All of the people saw the lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain." Who has ever seen smoke come out of a mountain unless it was a volcano? This was not a volcano. They saw the smoke billowing from the mountain, heard the thunder, and the long frightening trumpet blast. It was very loud. They stood and were shaking with fear. You would too. So many times in the Bible when people got near God, when God actually came with an angel or His presence, they shook. They shook with fear. He is mighty. He is powerful. He is more than I thought He was. He is awesome. They said to Moses, "You tell us what God says and we will obey but do not let God speak directly to us. It will kill us. Do not let it happen." Do you know what Moses said? "Do not be afraid for God has come in this way to show you His awesome power so that from now on you will be afraid to sin against Him." Are you afraid to sin? Are you afraid to sin against God? I want to tell you a little saying. If there is any area of sin that holds fascination for you it proves you do not have a fear of God.

Some of you are so caught up in pornography. Right now, some of you are just being tempted by it, just a little bit. Maybe you are a teenage boy, a little kid, a grown man or a woman. It is hard. Right now it is

just kind of fascinating. It comes there and pops up on the internet. You think, "I wonder what that would be like, just see what it is and then I would know to avoid it." You watch a little bit of it. It is kind of interesting. Oh, it is kind of exciting. Next thing you know you have to go back again and again and again because it is fascinating. Let me tell you, if any sin holds fascination for you, you do not know this God like this. This God makes you shake because you know how strong He is, how serious He is, how powerful He is. I think people do not teach on it. That is why I said at the beginning that you may have never heard a sermon on. I think that we are in the era where it is lovey, lovey, God, God. There is nothing wrong with that; that is how I came to God was understanding that he is a loving, kind, good God. At the same time He is God. He is a holy God. He is a righteous God and He does not put up with stuff. You need to know that if you are going to serve the Lord. I know it and there are times in my life that I lose that fear of God. The Holy Spirit's job is to convict me of sin and it is like, "Betty, you have lost the fear of God." It is like, "God forgive me. I am so sorry." Maybe I got cocky. I do not know what I did. "Lord, please give me back the fear of the Lord. I repent. I am so sorry. I do not want to be like that." The next thing I know, it is back. I am not afraid of Him except in the sense of who He is is who He is and you have to accept it. That is just the way it is.

Was there anybody in the Bible besides Moses who had the same experience. Yes, Isaiah did. It says that Isaiah was in the king's courts and he was really under several kings. There was this one king named King Uzziah and he reigned I think 60 years, something about like that. Everybody loved him. They just loved him. He died and it was such a big, big thing that when Isaiah was going to say the year he saw the Lord. He said, "In the year King Uzziah died." I heard a sermon recently and a person said, "My father was such a controller that when he died, the year he died, I really felt like I started serving the Lord, because that was gone." I do not think King Uzziah was a bad guy but he was so powerful Isaiah marked the year by his death. Listen to what he said. "In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne and His train filled the temple." The way you could tell how important a king was, was how long their train was. You think about those pictures you see of those kings and they have those robes on. They have ermine about their neck, velvet and they have a crown on and they turn sidewise and there is that train. It is not that long. It might be 4-5 feet, but they are important. Everybody knows they are important. Maybe you live in a country where you do have a king. Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord and his train filled the temple." Think about how long that was, how big the temple was, "Hovering around him were mighty angels with six wings. They were angels of fire and they had six wings." It describes them, what they did with these wings and then, "They sang in this great chorus, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord. Holy. Wonderful. The whole earth is filled with His glory. There was such singing that it shook the temple on its foundation and suddenly the entire sanctuary was filled with smoke." There you go again. There is that smoke that happened back in Exodus. Here it is in Isaiah hundreds of years later. "Then I said, My doom is sealed for I am a foul-mouthed sinner and I am a member of a sinful foul-mouthed race." I will tell you something. If you have a foul mouth, I bet you do not have the fear of the Lord. I do not believe you could. I believe the Holy Spirit would say, "No, you cannot do it." I do not care who is cussing around you, I do not care if your whole office cusses, if you belong to the Lord you be like Isaiah and say, "Lord, clean up my mouth." It says, "One of the might angels flew over to the altar, with a pair of tongs picked up a burning coal and he said, he touched my lips with it and he said you are now pronounced not guilty because this coal has touched your lips, your sins are all forgiven." You can be like that. You can decide to live a holy life.

Am I talking about that you have to keep this rule and this rule and this rule, you have to keep 496 rules and then you have to keep 500 rules and you have to be perfect? You cannot have any fun. You cannot laugh. You sure cannot laugh because God is serious. You have to be afraid of God. No, I am not talking about that. I hope you are getting what I am talking about. Are you? Do you get it? It is this loving God who loves you more than you could ever imagine is still who He is. I tell you what it would be like. It would be like the president if he is your father, your daddy, and you are his daughter or son. You want to go in and see him. You want to go in and say, "Hey Daddy, will you take me to the mall? Will you do this, Daddy?" As you are trying to go in, all of a sudden you see dignitaries everywhere. They are important people. You see his office and for the first time you realize my daddy is the President of the United States. Oh whoa. There is something about that that makes you want to do better, to live right, and to carry yourself in a better way. That is what I am talking about.

Was there anybody else in the Bible that experienced this? Hundreds of years later, it happened again. See, it can happen to you. This time, it was when Jesus was on the earth. He was a man. They were still trying to figure out, "Is He God? Is He the Messiah? Could the Messiah come from Nazareth? Could He be who He says He is? How do we know? How do we know for sure?" One day, Jesus borrowed

Peter and John's fishing boat. They were just fisherman, had a fishing business, Pete and John's. Jesus borrowed their boat to preach from. It was a wonderful thing and He was so appreciative. When He finished speaking He said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper and let down your nets and you will catch a lot of fish." He said, "Sir." He did not say Lord or Master, he said Sir because He was not quite sure who Jesus really was yet. "Sir, we have worked hard all night. We have not caught a thing but if you say so, we will try again." This time, their nets were so full that they began to tear. A shout for help went out. Their partners came in the other boat. They loaded it down. Soon both boats were sinking with so many fish. All of a sudden Peter realized and it shocked him and struck him. He felt that awe of being in the presence of God. He fell to his knees before Jesus. He said, "Oh sir, please leave us for I am a sinful man. I am too much of a sinner for you to have around." Have you had those times? I have. I have had them where it was like "Lord, why would you use me?" I am not having low self-esteem. I am not lacking in confidence. I just see who the Lord is. I see Him for who He is, just like these people talk about it. "I saw the Lord." You think, "Lord, I am not your person. You need to find somebody else. Lord depart. You are so mighty." That is the fear of the Lord. He saw that miracle. He saw a miracle and this is what it did to him. All through the Bible that happens to people, over and over; they see that risen Lord.

Are you supposed to be afraid of Him like a cringing child before an angry father? I do not know if you have ever had an angry father that was a yeller and a screamer. If you have, I am so sorry. I am so sorry. Get healed. That is not God. God does not want that to happen to you. He does not want that. He wants to heal you of that hurt. That is a painful hurt. It makes you afraid of God. Another is that He just wants you to have a healthy respect and honor for Him. I want to read you a verse in Proverbs. I wonder if you know this verse. Let me see if I can find it here. Proverbs 9:10 says, "For reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom." You have been saying, "I want to be wise. I want to go to college. I want to get degrees. I want to go to graduate school. I want to get a Ph.D. I want to be a doctor. I want to greatly increase my education, knowledge and wisdom." "For reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom." The fear of God results in understanding of every other kind. Did you know that? You would not think that would you? If you wanted to be a scientist, would you think that? Would you think that knowing God would result in understanding of the scientific world? If you talk to scientists who are Christians they would tell you. They would say, "I prayed and prayed and said, Lord." In fact I will tell you one. Do you know who George Washington Carver is? He was a black man who lived in the days of a lot of racial prejudice. He was a genius. He was highly intelligent. He wanted to do something with his life. He looked at a peanut and he said, "God show me what is in a peanut." God did amazing things. You can do that. You can ask God those kind of things. In Proverbs also it says, "Call out for insight. Call out for understanding. Call out and seek wisdom like silver or gold." Have you done that? There are a lot of ways to seek the Lord. This one says if you will do that, you will get the fear of the Lord and understanding. This is an exciting part of God that can take you up a level, up higher. God wants to take you up higher.

Can people see that smoke today? Yes. I have. I do not know if that was what that was in the Bible, but I have seen the Glory cloud. God is so real. It happened. If I told you where it happened you would be going, "Oh, you have got to be kidding." I am not kidding. It happened in a car sitting out in front of a fast-food restaurant. I was sitting and talking to my friend who loved the Lord. She is so godly. We were just talking, talking about the Lord. All of a sudden, the car started filling up with this smoke or mist. It filled up more and more and more. I wondered what is happening? Why can I not see her? What is all of the stuff in the car? I said to her, "Do you see that smoke? What is that?" She just smiled at me. She did not say anything. I do not know what that was all about. All I know is things like that make you think that I have to live a good life. I need to pay attention to what God says and I need to pay attention to His laws.

You cannot have too much familiarity with God. Those people that say, "Oh yeah, God does not care." You watch television now and listening to songs that talk about me and this gal I am living with. I think, "You do not know the Lord. He does not put up with things. He does not say that you are special you get to sin; it is okay if you sin." He does not do that. That is not God. Do not fall for that. Also, do you want to be a friend of God? Have you heard that song? Do you sing that song in your church? "I am a friend of God. I am a friend of God. He is my friend." That is the neatest song. I am telling you, even in that friendship there has to be healthy respect. There has to be an understanding of who He is and yet He still wants a relationship with me. Am I making it clear? Are you kind of getting an idea of what I am talking about?

I would like to tell you about my life. I do not think I have ever really given much of my testimony on this show. I grew up in church and a little of me had a fear of the Lord. I can remember when I was a little girl I had a grandmother who loved God. To me, she was ancient. There is no telling how old she really was but to me she was so old because she was Granny. We used to make what we called tin can telephones. You took these cans that vegetables came in and you put a little hole in them and you put the string in and tied it. If you stretched it tight enough and put your ear in the can and the other person put their ear in the can, you could talk to each other and listen and you could hear them talk. The sound would travel along that string. I can remember playing tin-can telephone with my grandmother. I do not know how old I was and I do not know how I knew about the Holy Spirit or anything. I can remember playing and going, "Granny, this is the Holy Spirit calling." My little grandmother would say, "Hello, Holy Spirit." Even with that as a little child, there was something in me that knew God was powerful. God was more than us.

Even little children can know the fear of the Lord. I will tell you someone who did. Samuel. His mother could not have a baby and she was so frustrated. Finally, the prophet said you can have a baby. She had said, "Lord, if You will give me a baby I will give him up to You and he can serve You all of the days of his life." That turned out to be Samuel. Finally the day came that she had to take him to Eli and leave him at the temple. He really did not know much about the Lord. He was just a little child. One night he heard, "Samuel, Samuel." He got up and ran to Eli and said, "Did you call Master?" He said, "No go back to bed." He heard "Samuel, Samuel." That happened three times. That third time Eli said go back and say, "Speak Lord, your servant heareth." He did and God told him in very strong words that put fear in him. He did not want to tell anybody. Eli said, "Tell me what He said." He said, "Your sons are sinning and you have not corrected them and I am going to do something about it." Samuel had the fear of the Lord that He would speak the Word of the Lord.

I want to encourage you to ask God to give you this fear. It is not anything to be afraid of. It takes you into a holier life. You can live a holy life. You cannot do it in your own strength; that is for sure. You can by the power of the Holy Spirit. Close your eyes right now and say, "Father, I give all of my life to You. I believe in You Jesus. I believe in You God. I want the fear of God. Father, fill me up with the Holy Spirit and give me power to do Your will."

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to have the "fear of God?"
2. What attribute of God causes you to fear Him?
3. From scriptures mentioned what made the following people fear God:

Moses and the Israelites

Isaiah

Samuel

Peter

4. What does the fear of God produce in you?
5. Have you asked God to give you this fear?

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Ministries, P.O. Box 8882, Amarillo, TX 79114-8882, Amarillo, TX 79109, phone 806-433-4649, www.bettyswann.com,
betty@bettyswann.com